

CHARACTER EDUCATION: A RELATIONSHIP WITH BUILDING HEALTH

by

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship between the use of character education programming and school health. Measuring and improving school health is a process that supports social, emotional, ethical and civic education. Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp define this concept as a healthy school is one in which the institutional, administrative, and teacher levels are in harmony; and the school meets functional needs as it successfully copes with disruptive external forces and directs its energies toward its mission (Hoy, Tarter & Kottkamp, 1991).

School climate, school culture, and school health are used synonymously in the research. They refer to the quality and character of school life. School climate is based on patterns of school life experiences and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning and leadership practices, and organizational structures. It recognizes the two essential processes that research and best practices from a number of traditions (character education, school reform, social emotional learning, community schooling, pro-social education, risk prevention and health/mental health promotion) have indicated that there are two core processes that educators, parents/guardians, students and community leaders need to focus on to support students developing the skills, knowledge and dispositions that provide the foundation for school

success and the ability to love, work and become an engaged and effective citizen (Cohen & Sandy, 2007).

A character education program entitled CHARACTER COUNTS! ® has been implemented in a rural elementary school located in south central Pennsylvania. Implementation included initial as well as ongoing faculty training, district financial support, administrative support and parent education. Another rural elementary building similar in size and demographics located in the same region of the state reportedly has not implemented a formal character education program.

This study will investigate the level of character education and school health in each of these buildings to investigate a possible correlation between character education programming and school health.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate my dissertation to my parents John and Catherine Crider. In life, both of these individuals helped shape who I am today. They taught me to keep trying and never give up. They modeled a life of simplicity, a life that revolved around family, a life of importance because of who you are and how you treat others. Both were individuals of character and lived lives of integrity and meaning. I am so very proud to be their son.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Pursuing interests (including knowledge and grades) comes naturally. Educators make decisions that are ethical, taking into account the interests of others and the long-term implications of our choices (Britzman & Hanson, 2005). Decisions are influenced by a sense of morality. Broadly put, morality is the achievement of good character and of the aspiration to be a good person. The question is then, what is good character?

Recognizing the importance of education to the national well being, the authors of a booklet prepared by the Center on National Education Policy (1996) noted that the founders of public education were seeking to achieve more than teaching children to read and write. They believed that public schools, among other things, were meant also to prepare students to become responsible citizens, to improve social condition and to enhance individual happiness, and to enrich individual lives. Aiken et al. (1995) stated, “knowing that so many children lack role models and caring adults in their lives and knowing, as a consequence, that society is in real danger, the educational system would be negligent were it not to respond” (p. 2).

A great deal of education, social bolstering, and sustained effort are needed for children to become moral and ethical (Honig, 2001). Present and future educational leaders have a moral obligation to not only guide the process of education, but to implement programs that build upon and strengthen the character of colleagues, youth, and ourselves. National morality of youth has experienced a decline. A hole is in the moral ozone and it is getting bigger (Josephson, 2006). Educators know the problem exists. Educators also know the problems will not remedy themselves. To what extent can the leader influence the moral development of others? If the answer is relatively little, then the leader who wants to create

change will embody all of the performance abilities and attributes needed to create productive change (Schwahn & Spady, 2002) Life is much more than standardized tests, though academic achievement is obviously important in this current time of accountability. Employers are also interested in hiring individuals of character who are dependable and work well together. Character education programming may be the tool educational leaders need to make an impact both on moral development, academic achievement, and building health.

What do the best schools in America, whether serving communities of economic privilege or poverty, have in common? In addition to very dedicated educators, they have school cultures that foster excellence and moral character. Such cultures consist of the shared expectations, values, and patterns of behavior that define who they are, how they treat each other and how they work. In their book *Building an Intentional School Culture: Excellence in Academics and Character* (2007), Elbot and Fulton refer to Harvard educator Roland Barth's wise observation: "A school's culture has far more influence on life and learning in the schoolhouse than that of the state department of education, the superintendent, the school board, or even the school principal can ever have" (p.2).

For almost one hundred years, educators have appreciated the importance of school climate. In 1908, Perry was the first educational leader to explicitly write about how school climate affects students' and the process of learning. Although Dewey did not write explicitly about school climate, his focus on the social dimension of school life and the notion that schools should focus on enhancing the skills, knowledge and dispositions that support engaged democratic citizens (Dewey, 1927) implicitly touch on what kind of environment or climate the school reflects. Very early educational writings about school climate were, in essence, case studies that spoke to the health of the school building.

Empirically grounded school climate research began the 1950's when Halpin and Croft initiated a tradition of systemically studying the impact of school climate on student learning and development. Early systematic studies of school climate were also spurred by organizational research as well as studies in school effectiveness (Anderson, 1982; Creemers & Reezigt, 1999). Early school climate studies tended to focus on observable characteristics (Anderson, 1982). Over the last three decades there has been an extraordinary and growing body of research that attests to the importance of school health. Positive school health supports learning and positive youth development.

Research has identified many elements, or "dimensions" that make up school climate, ranging from the size of the school to noise levels in hallways and cafeterias, from the physical structure of the building to the physical comfort levels (involving such factors as heating, cooling, and lighting) of the individuals and how safe they feel, from opportunities for student-teacher interaction, the quality of interactions in the teachers' lounge to a range of interpersonal and instructional dimensions of school life.

By nature of the profession, educators have always had opportunity, and most feel compelled, to share a sense of what is right and wrong with young people. Teachers and administrators are not values neutral (Akin et al. 1995). Choice of words, tone of voice, actions, behaviors, and treatment of others all send messages to children about how a person should think and behave. Generally, the public believes it is appropriate for educators to teach ethical behavior as the values taught are universally accepted by the school community (Goode, 1989).

A number of values, or ethics education programs have emerged over the past several years in an attempt to instill moral knowledge and enable students to translate this knowledge into moral action. One such program is the internationally known CHARACTER COUNTS! ®

framework, a nationally recognized framework for character education developed by the Josephson Institute of Ethics. The framework defines central pillars of character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. Uses a delivery model that emphasizes a (TEAM) teach, enforce, advocate, and model approach, and strives for three desired outcomes to include consciousness of character, commitment to ethical behavior, and competence in moral judgment (Josephson, 2006).

Typically, effective implementations of character education programs are limited for a number of reasons. Lack of funding, as with any program, is an obstacle but can be overcome. Buy-in from educators in the field may be difficult. Many teachers feel overwhelmed with the great number of add-on programs currently integrated into a typical school day. Character education must not be looked at as an additional burden, but a starting place. Community views of the character education program can have either a positive or negative effect. During the 1980s and early 1990s some educators viewed the values-clarification approach as morally relativistic and ultimately detrimental to the goal of character development, they began advocating a return to character education. Advocates of character education assert that teachers and schools have shirked their responsibilities for character education in recent decades. Lack of recent attention to character in schools has fostered a moral decline in youth, evidenced by increasing violence, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, and similar irresponsible and disrespectful behavior (Mehlig & Milson, 2002). This moral decline may also have an effect on the academic achievement of our youth, and the health of our school buildings.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study will be to determine the possible relationship of a well-implemented character education program on the climate of the building. This study will

investigate the level or lack of school implementation of a character education program, and will then explore the programs possible effects on the health of the building. Is there a link between character education programming and school health? At the core of character education programs lies the premise that such programming sets the stage for a warm, welcoming environment in which to work and learn. A positive school climate can directly relate to, and is necessary for, successful teacher development and student achievement (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993). Climate creates a culture dedicated to teaching and ensuring the goal that each student will achieve to his/her maximum potential. Positive climate created through teacher efficacy encourages teachers to believe they have the ability to influence student learning in a positive manner (Ashton, 1985). Climate has been a variable in student achievement, student motivation, teachers' adoption of innovations, superintendents' ratings of teachers' competence, and teachers' classroom management strategies (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993). A study of the effect of character education programming to indicate if it has an impact on measures of school health is necessary.

Research Question

Does the implementation of a character education program have an impact on the health of the building?

Research Hypothesis

The implementation of a character education program will have an impact on the health of the building.

Null Hypothesis

The implementation of a character education program will not have an impact on the health of the building.

To investigate the possible effect of character education, data will be collected from two elementary schools in mid-sized, rural school districts in south central Pennsylvania. One school will use the CHARACTER COUNTS! framework the other school will not. Character education program effectiveness and/ or the lack of character education programming will be assessed in both buildings using the Character Education Quality Standards survey developed by the Character Education Partnership (CEP). School building climate in both buildings will be measured using the Organizational Health Inventory - Elementary (OHI-E).

Variables

The two dependent variables in this study are teachers' measure of program effectiveness and climate as defined in the operational definitions. The independent variable is the character education program, itself, its implementation and overall effectiveness, and/or the lack of character education programming.

Significance of the Problem

The purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship between the use of character education programming and school climate. The study will ask the following question: Is there a relationship between character education and a healthy school climate?

Measuring and improving school climate is a process that supports social, emotional, ethical and civic education. School climate refers to the quality and character of school life. The definition of school climate is based on patterns of school life experiences and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning and leadership practices, and organizational structures. It recognizes that there are two core processes that educators, parents/guardians, students and community leaders need to focus on to support students developing the skills, knowledge and dispositions that provide the foundation for school success

and the ability to love, work and become an engaged and effective citizen (Cohen & Sandy, 2007).

Significance of the Study

Character education is a national movement creating schools that foster ethical, responsible, and caring young people by modeling and teaching good character through emphasis on universal values that we all share. Character education is the intentional, proactive effort by schools, districts, and states to instill in their students important core, ethical and performance values such as caring, honesty, diligence, fairness, fortitude, responsibility, and respect for self and others. Character education is not a "quick fix." It provides long-term solutions that address moral, ethical, and academic issues that are of growing concern about society and the safety of schools. Character education teaches students how to be their best selves and how to do their best work. Character education not only cultivates minds, it nurtures hearts.

Moral education is not a new idea. Moral education is as old as education itself. Down through history, in countries all over the world, education has had two great goals: to help young people become smart and to help them become good (Lickona, 1991). Good character is not formed automatically; it is developed over time through a sustained process of teaching, example, learning, and practice – it is developed through character education. Character development is a process of continual education that starts at a very young age and continues through adulthood. The intentional teaching of good character is particularly important in today's society since our youth face many opportunities and dangers unknown to earlier generations. Today's youth are bombarded with many more negative influences through the media and other external sources prevalent in today's culture. The day-to-day pressures impinge

on the time that parents and children have together. Studies show that the average child spends only 38.5 minutes a week (33.4 hours a year) in meaningful conversation with his or her parents, while they spend 1,500 hours watching television. (American Family Research Council, 1990 and Harper's, November, 1999.) Since children spend about 900 hours a year in school. Schools need to resume a proactive role in assisting families and communities by developing caring, respectful environments where students learn core, ethical and performance values. In order to create the caring and respectful schools and communities educators want, they must look deeper – they must be intentional, proactive, and comprehensive in their work to encourage the development of good character in young people.

Character education is defined as a course of instruction designed to educate and assist students in developing basic civic values and character traits, a service ethic and community outreach, to improve the school environment and student achievement and learning. The program may include and teach: trustworthiness, including honesty, integrity, reliability and loyalty; respect, including regard for others, tolerance and courtesy; responsibility, including hard work, economic self-reliance, accountability, diligence, perseverance and self-control; fairness, including justice, consequences of bad behavior, principles of nondiscrimination and freedom from prejudice; caring, including kindness, empathy, compassion, consideration, generosity and charity; and citizenship, including love of country, concern for the common good, respect for authority and the law and community mindedness (Elkind & Sweet, 2004).

Definition of Terms

The following definitions of terms used throughout this study are provided so that the reader may have a better understanding.

CHARACTER:

The combination of internal qualities and outward behavior, which distinguishes an individual. It is both persons' virtues and vices. It is evidenced by the ongoing display of personal traits and set of beliefs (Josephson, 2006).

CHARACTER EDUCATION:

An approach to the teaching of specific attributes related to values and founded on the notion that upright standards of behavior and, good qualities of character are desirable (Lickona, 1991).

CHARACTER COUNTS!:

A nationally recognized framework for character education developed by the Josephson Institute of Ethics. The framework defines central pillars of character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. Uses a delivery model that emphasizes a (TEAM) teach, enforce, advocate, and model approach, and strives for three desired outcomes to include consciousness of character, commitment to ethical behavior, and competence in moral judgment (Josephson, 2006).

SCHOOL CLIMATE:

School climate is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures (Cohen & Grier, 2010).

Assumptions

The sample size will include teachers who graduated from various institutions with a variety of educational experiences and their own personal beliefs regarding the importance of widely accepted character education and building level health. Teachers in both buildings will have varied years of experience in the field. The teachers will answer the survey instruments

with thought and careful consideration of their answers. The school populations are relatively homogeneous, with no statistical variance among the student population. The schools will exhibit a level of similarity in size and demographic indicators.

Limitations

The limitations for this study include the operational definitions and the precision, reliability and validity of the instruments used for this study. The design of the study will also be a limitation since it will be done with only two buildings. The number of surveys collected will be similar between buildings but relatively low in amount for the study. The other forces, aside from character education, that can affect the health of a school building such as leadership style, collegiality, and community relations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the relevant literature about character education and school climate as it relates to the field in general and to this study in particular. The focus of this study is to investigate the possible impact of character education programming on building climate. The literature review includes a historical perspective of character education, a general overview of character education programs, specific information on the CHARACTER COUNTS! framework, and finally an overview of the importance of school building climate.

A recent survey conducted by the Josephson Institute of Ethics would say that much more could be done. In a 2006 national survey of over 20,000 high school youth, 60% cheated on exams, 28% stole from a store within the past twelve months, and 82% admit that they have lied to a parent about something significant within the past twelve months. (Josephson, 2006). A formalized character education curriculum should be added to the plate of education. A review of the literature reveals a recent increase in the interest of character education.

History of Character Education

Stanhope (1991) conducted a study which recorded character education research performed in the United States from 1929 to 1991. Using the *Education Index: A cumulative Author Subject Index to a Selected List of Educational Periodicals and Yearbooks*, Stanhope listed 1,176 articles which focused on the role of schools in regard to character education. Over the 62 year period, a majority of these articles were published primarily in two ten year periods, the first beginning in 1929 and ending in 1938, and the second beginning in 1979 and ending in 1988.

These dates correspond with dates identified by Leming (1993) and McClellan (1992), which indicated that during the 1920's and 1930's, schools were focusing on character development as an educational goal. As with many educational aspects the pendulum continues to swing back and forth and the importance of educational goals and emphasis swings as well. Character related issues returned to the forefront of education in the 1990's. Cohen (1995) stated that character educators today are responding to the public's perceived moral decline of America's social and cultural life. Cohen quoted Martin, then executive director of the Character Education Partnership as saying, "character education has really exploded around the country" (pp.1-8). Lickona (1991), a noted author and authority on moral education, agreed that education is seeing the beginnings of a new character education movement, restoring good character to its historical place as a desirable outcome of schooling.

The need for character education in the school setting becomes more apparent with the passing of each day. Young people are almost unanimous in saying that ethics and character are important on both a personal level and in business, but they express very cynical attitudes about whether a person can be ethical and succeed (Josephson, 2006). Character education is the intentional effort to develop in young people core ethical and performance values that are widely affirmed across all cultures. To be effective, character education must include all stakeholders in a school community and must permeate school climate and curriculum (DeRoche, 2000).

The Character Education Partnership (CEP) a national organization for the advancement of character education provides the following eleven principles of character education:

- Effective character education promotes core ethical values as well as supportive performance values as the foundation of good character.

- Effective character education defines “character comprehensively to include thinking, feeling, and behavior.
- Effective character education uses a comprehensive, intentional, and proactive approach to character development.
- Effective character education creates a caring school community.
- Effective character education provides students with opportunities for moral action.
- Effective character education includes a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character, and helps them succeed.
- Effective character education strives to develop students’ self-motivation.
- Effective character education engages the school staff as a learning and moral community that shares responsibility for character education and attempts to adhere to the same core values that guide the education of the students.
- Effective character education fosters shared leadership and long-range support of the character education initiative.
- Effective character education engages families and community members as partners in the character-building effort.
- Effective character education assess the character of the school, the school staff’s functioning as character educators, and the extent to which students manifest good character. (Eleven Principles of Character Education, 2004)

These eleven principles provide guidance for local school districts as they begin to develop and/or enhance their character education programs. The Character Education Quality

Standards self-assessment tool will be used in this study to quantify the overall effectiveness or lack of a character education program.

Character education includes a broad range of concepts such as positive school culture, moral education, just communities, caring school communities, social emotional learning, positive youth development, civic education, and service learning. All of these approaches promote the intellectual, social, emotional, and ethical development of young people and share a commitment to help young people become responsible, caring, and contributing citizens (Lickona, 1991).

Character education is not new. It was included as an important objective for the first U.S. public schools. Today, it is even legislatively mandated or encouraged in most states. The current movement is simply a reminder of education's long history of stressing core values such as respect, integrity, and hard work to help students become capable people and good citizens. Character education provides effective solutions to ethical and academic issues that are of growing concern (Elkind & Sweet, 2004). Educators have successfully used character education to transform their schools, improve school culture, increase achievement for all learners, develop global citizens, restore civility, prevent anti-social and unhealthy behaviors, and improve job satisfaction and retention among teachers (Mehlig & Milson, 2002).

Character Education Programming

The What Works in Character Education project led by Marvin Berkowitz and Melinda Bier of the University of Missouri – St. Louis (2005), reviewed successful character education programs and how each has positively affected participating students. The authors state “Character education has grown rapidly in the past few decades, but little research has been done to document its effectiveness” (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). Their study has helped to pave the way

for character education program acceptance in the school setting. The study looks only at those programs with a sound research base that meet the eleven principles of character education. The CEP commissioned this study and will bring scientific research on character development to K-12 educators and to the nations teacher preparation institutions (Berkowitz& Bier, 2005).

Extensive literature exists on the many different types of character education programs available. The different programs have their own challenges. Research also points to the importance of the implementation of a program. While it takes time, effort, and staff development to integrate character education into schools we are seeing that the investment is worth the effort ... Staff development is essential when character education is initiated and as new faculty members join the school, and should continue as the program progresses (Schaeffer, 1999).

This initial and ongoing staff development will affect teacher's sense of efficacy for character education. Teacher's feelings, their comfort level, and their belief of its importance, toward a program can be the impetus for the survival and/or death of a program. Choosing a solid program is important. Appropriate staff development is also a key aspect to the success of character education.

Faculties in all schools are inherently character educators the moment they step in front of the students. The most appropriate means to teach values is through teacher modeling (Reetz, 1999). In her article "Faculty Focus on Moral and Character Education" Reetz states, "the most frequently mentioned form of instruction regarding moral and character education among faculty was through modeling" (p 210). The literature states that staff development in the area of character education is important to the success of the program.

Schools offer critically important opportunities to ensure that all students get the support and help they need to reach their full potential. Schools with high-quality character education are places where students, teachers, and parents want to be. Schools are places where young people do their best work because they feel safe, appreciated, supported, and challenged by their peers and adults around them (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005).

Most educators agree concerning the need for programs on character, but many struggle with the concept of additional tasks set before them. In some states character education is now mandated. The literature indicates that this trend will continue. The three R's are no longer enough if we are to create a generation of responsible citizens.

Many schools are leery of engaging because the program may detract from the primary focus of increasing academic achievement. A study conducted by the California Department of Education (2003) found a correlation between effective character education programming and academic achievement. In their study authors Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn, and Smith state, "our research suggests that school goals and activities that are associated with good character education programs are also associated with academic achievement" (p. 57).

CHARACTER COUNTS!

CHARACTER COUNTS! cultivates ethical behavior among everyone. CHARACTER COUNTS! helps adults shape children into adults of integrity (Josephson, 2006). An initiative of the Josephson Institute of Ethics in Los Angeles, CA, CHARACTER COUNTS! is by far one of the most widely implemented character education frameworks in the nation. Over five million youth come into regular contact with CHARACTER COUNTS! through more than 560 school districts, communities, and youth serving organizations such as the YMCA, the American Red Cross, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, and United Way (Josephson, 2006).

The framework of CHARACTER COUNTS! includes three tiers. The first, deals with values clarification in the form of six pillars: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. The values are accepted in every culture and across the political and religious spectrums. Each pillar can embody other principles, so they sum up the most accepted ethical values (Britzman & Hanson, 2005). The pillars are defined and are the backbone of the CHARACTER COUNTS! program. CHARACTER COUNTS! provides the foundation and the common language that allows the framework to stand. The following definitions are taken directly from the CHARACTER COUNTS! web page at www.charactercounts.org.

- **Trustworthiness** involves being honest, sincere, forthright and candid; having the integrity to discern what's right and the moral courage to act on it; keeping promises; being dependable and prepared; and having loyalty to stand by, stick up for and protect one's family, friends, workplace, and country.
- **Respect** entails honoring the individual worth and dignity of others, showing courtesy and civility, honoring reasonable social standards and customs, living by the Golden Rule, accepting differences, judging on character and ability, respecting the autonomy of others, and avoiding actual or threatened violence.
- **Fairness** entails impartiality, through gathering of facts, and considering all perspectives before making judgment.
- **Caring** involves compassion, empathy, kindness, consideration, charity, sacrifice, gratitude, mercy, and forgiveness, altruism, generosity, and sharing.
- **Citizenship** involves obeying the law, doing one's share, pursuing the common good, protecting the environment, obeying authority, and honoring the principles of democracy.

Schools that effectively promote good character come to an agreement on the core ethical and performance values that they wish to instill in their students. Some schools use other terms such as virtues, traits, pillars or expectations to refer to the desirable character qualities they wish to foster. Whatever the terminology, the core values promoted by quality character education are ones which affirm human dignity, promote the development and welfare of the individual, serve the common good, define our rights and responsibilities in a democratic society, and meet the classical test of universality (DeRoche, 2000).

The second tier of the CHARACTER COUNTS! framework deals with adult behavior and the most appropriate model for using the program. CHARACTER COUNTS! identifies it as the TEAM approach, for Teach, Enforce, Advocate, and Model. When implementing the program adults must teach children that their character counts, explaining that their success and happiness depend on who they are on the inside, not on what they have or how they look. Adults teach them the difference between right and wrong, and help them guide their thoughts and actions by the six pillars of character, explaining these words with examples from the immediate surroundings, history and news (Britzman & Hanson, 2005).

Adults need to enforce the six pillars of character, rewarding good behavior and discouraging bad behavior by imposing fair, consistent consequences. Adults demonstrate courage and firmness of will by enforcing these core values even when it is difficult or costly to do so (Josephson, 2006).

Children need to know that adults advocate character, continually encouraging children to live up to the six pillars. Adults should not be neutral about the importance of character or casual about improper conduct. Adults need to be clear and uncompromising that they expect young

people to be trustworthy, respectful, responsible, fair, caring, and good citizens (Josephson, 2006).

Lickona (1991), argues that character development must start with a solid theory of good character and the schools goals. “Character must be broadly conceived to encompass the cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects of morality, “ he writes. “Good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good. Schools must help children understand the core values, adopt or commit to them, and then act upon them in their own lives” (p. 138).

Adults must also model good behavior. Everything adults say and do, or neglect to, sends a message about their values. Adults must ensure these messages reinforce their lessons about doing the right thing even when it is difficult (Goode, 1989).

The means of indoctrinating the six pillars of character must be purposeful. Activities need to be aimed directly at demonstrating the six pillars. A solid character education program must be pervasive. To be successful it should permeate the entire school, organization, and ideally the entire community. Adults, teachers, and program coordinators must repeat the six pillars and their meaning often so the values become ingrained in children’s minds. Children look for consistency at every level. They expect rewards and punishment to be fair. Youth also connect better when information is presented to them in creative and concrete ways. The six pillars must be woven into interesting and meaningful activities that have a real-world connection (Josephson, 2006).

Finally, the desired outcome of the process is for each student to become conscious of, committed to, and competent at using the six pillars to guide their lives. Children must be able to grasp the many dimensions of each pillar, internalize the importance of these values in their daily

lives, and be able to make successful decisions each day based on their knowledge of the six pillars of character (Josephson, 2006).

School Building Climate

Over the past two decades, researchers and educators have increasingly recognized the importance of K-12 school climate. A school climate research summary from authors Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, and Pickeral (2009), details how school climate is associated with and / or promotes safety, healthy relationships, engaged learning and teaching and school improvement efforts.

School climate, by definition, reflects students' and parent's experiences of school life socially, emotionally, civically, ethically as well as academically. Over the past two decades, research studies from a range of separate fields have identified research based-based school improvement guidelines that converge predictably to promote safe, caring, responsive and participatory schools (Benninga et al, 2003).

School climate matters. Positive and sustained school climate is associated with and/or predictive of positive youth development, effective risk prevention, and health promotion efforts, student learning and academic achievement, increased student graduation rates, and teacher retention. These research findings have contributed to the U.S. Department of Education examining ways to use school climate and culture as an organizing data-driven concept that recognizes the range of pro-social efforts such as character education, developmental assets, and social emotional learning (Jennings, 2009).

School climate is an important factor in the successful implementation of school reform programs (Bulach & Malone, 1994; Dellar, 1998; Gittelsohn et al., 2003; Gregory, Henry, and Schoeny, 2007). For example, teachers' perceptions of school climate influences their ability to

implement school-based character and development programs (Beets et al., 2008). Studies about the implementation of character education programs suggest that the most effective ones are those incorporated into the school curriculum and developed holistically with the school community (Kerr et al. 2004). Critical research that informs the relationship between school climate and school improvement efforts emerged from a multi-year study of schools in Chicago (Byrk et al. 2010).

Bryk and his colleagues found evidence that schools with high relational trust (good social relationships among members of the school community) are more likely to make changes that improve student achievement (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). In their most recent summary of this work, Bryk and his colleagues (2010) detail how the following four different systems interact in ways that support or undermine school improvement efforts:

1. professional capacity (e.g. teachers' knowledge and skills; support for teacher learning; and school-based learning communities);
2. order, safety and norms (labeled as "school learning climate");
3. parent, school- community ties;
4. instructional guidance (e.g. curriculum alignment and the nature of academic demands).

These dimensions shape the process of teaching and learning. The authors underscore how their research has shown relational trust is the "glue" or the essential element that coordinates and supports these four processes essential to effective school climate improvement (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, and Easton, 2010).

A sustainable, positive school climate fosters youth development and learning necessary for a productive, contributive, and satisfying life in a democratic society. This climate includes norms, values and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally and physically safe. The Center for Social and Emotional Education in its School Climate Brief (January 2010) reports that people are engaged and respected in this type of climate. Students, families and educators work together to develop, live, and contribute to a shared school vision. Educators model and nurture an attitude that emphasizes the benefits of and satisfaction from, learning. Each person contributes to the operations of the school as well as the care of that physical environment (Cohen & Grier, 2010).

School climate influences how educators feel about being in school and how they teach. Research shows that school climate powerfully affects the lives of educators and teacher retention. School climate enhances or minimizes emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and feelings of low personal accomplishment (Miller, Brownwell, and Smith, 1999).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter will address participants, design and the data collection procedure. This study investigated the possible effects of character education programming on elementary school building health. The study was driven by a question formed from a thorough review of the literature. The question that drove the study is as follows: character education, is there a relationship with building health?

A character education program entitled CHARACTER COUNTS! has been implemented in a rural elementary school located in south central Pennsylvania. Implementation included initial as well as ongoing faculty training, district financial support, administrative support and parent education. For the purpose of this study, this school is labeled school A (Character Education School). Another rural elementary building similar in size and demographics located in the same region of the state reportedly has not implemented a formal character education program. For the purpose of this study, this school is labeled school B (Non-Character Education School). This study investigated school health and character education programming in each building to identify a possible correlation.

The measurement devices used for this study included the Character Education Quality Standards self-assessment survey. This survey was used to measure the overall quality of the character education program, and provided a reflection on character education practice within the school. No single script for effective character education exists, but there are some important guiding principles. Based on the practice of effective schools, the *Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education* form the cornerstone of the Character Education Partnership's (CEP) philosophy on how best to develop and implement high quality character education initiatives.

As broad principles that define excellence in character education, the eleven principles serve as guideposts that schools and others responsible for youth character development can use to plan evaluate their programs (Eleven Principles of Character Education, 2004). This survey instrument, developed by the CEP, is designed to provide a reflection on current practice, identify long and short-term objectives and to assist with development or improvement of strategic plan. Teachers read statements defining the eleven principles and then scored their school in each of the eleven areas. The rating is a four point Likert-type scale. Each principle is rated as (1) lacking evidence, (2) good, (3) highly effective, or (4) exemplary. Scores were added and averaged for each principle to investigate whether or not the buildings were significantly different in their character education efforts. Data from this instrument was used to ensure whether or not a character education program had been implemented effectively within each of the schools.

The Organizational Health Inventory - Elementary was used in this study to measure school climate. The inventory was developed and validated by Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp to measure organizational health. The survey consists of thirty-seven questions spread across five dimensions. These dimensions are Institutional Integrity, Resources, Influences, Teacher Affiliation, and Academic Emphasis. The teachers in both buildings rated the thirty-seven-item questionnaire using a four point Likert-type scale in which the choices were: (1) rarely occurs, (2) seldom occurs, (3) often occurs, and (4) very frequently occurs. The scores are weighted on a four-point scale with the direction depending on the nature of the item. The responses of the teachers were added together for each item. All the averages were added together for each dimension. As an example survey questions numbered 6, 7, 18, 24, and 31 are added and

averaged for the dimension of academic emphasis. Each of the other four dimensions have their own specific set of survey questions that relate to that dimension.

An independent measures t test was used to determine if the results of each dimension were significant. The independent measures t test uses the data from the two separate samples to draw inferences about the mean difference between the two populations. The sample statistic is the sample mean difference between the two schools responses on the survey. The population parameter is the population mean difference between the two schools. The estimated standard error for the sample mean difference is computed by combining the errors for the two sample means (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2004).

Participants

Elementary teachers were the target population for this study. Participants were employed in two mid-sized, rural elementary schools. One school had implemented a character education program, school A (CE). The other school had not implemented a school wide character education program, school B (NCE). Total student population for the each of the schools is approximately 350 students. Total teacher population for each of the schools is approximately 20 teachers. Demographic percentages for each of the schools were gathered for economically disadvantaged students, ethnic minority, and special education. Those figures are presented in Table 1. The schools in this study were found to be similar. Approval to conduct the study was obtained by the researcher from both school districts' superintendents (see appendix C). Teachers in each of the buildings signed a consent to participate form prior to completing the surveys (see appendix D).

Design

The surveys were given to the teachers during a regularly scheduled faculty meeting, which allowed for maximum teacher participation. The researcher first provided a brief overview of the study and ensured that participants knew that their name would never appear on any research instrument. No identity would be made in the data analysis, and that once the surveys had been completed for a school they would not be able to be traced back to any particular individual. This was done to so that teachers would feel a level of anonymity and would provide their most honest response to the survey questions without fear of retaliation from administration.

The Character Education Quality Standards survey scores of the buildings were used to measure the “level” or lack of character education programming both in an overall score as well as individually investigating the eleven separate principles of effective character education within each of the schools. The OHI-E survey measured the building level health, also referred to as climate, of each of the schools. Data analysis of the OHI-E included both an overall health index and separate comparisons for each of the five dimensions of building health.

The purpose of this study is to examine the possible effect of character education programming on building health. Does the implementation of a character education program have an impact on the health of the building?

Analysis

Scores from the Character Education Quality Standards assessment were used to investigate the level of and overall effectiveness of character education programming in both buildings. Scores from each of the eleven principles of character education were evaluated as

well as the overall rating of the character education programming in school A (CE) and school B (NCE).

Statistical data from the Organizational Health Inventory - Elementary offered information related to the health in school A (CE) and school B (NCE). Specific data was gathered for the five separate domains of health: Institutional Integrity, Collegial Leadership, Resource Influence, Teacher Affiliation, and Academic Emphasis. Finally, an overall health index score was obtained for each building in the study.

An analysis of the data from both instruments indicated whether or not a significant impact from character education initiatives or the lack thereof occurred in regards to the building health in these two elementary schools.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

Schools continue to face the challenge of how to implement a variety of programs including character education while maintaining a positive level of building health. The current educational system requires that schools not only provide a quality education for students in the core subject areas but to also remedy many of societal issues including but not limited to anti bullying programs, childhood obesity, mental health concerns, liberal arts studies, and character education. These mandates are also coming at a time when financial resources are dwindling and many districts are faced with the realistic truth of trying to do more with less. This researcher believes educators feel overwhelmed with the expectations and that many in administration are concerned with maintaining an acceptable level of building health and/or climate. Without a positive collegial atmosphere most implementation projects are doomed to fail. A school building, its faculty must have a sense of purpose, a feeling of team, and certainly a level of collaboration to appropriately fulfill their roles as educators. This study evaluated the effect of character education programming on the level of building health.

The purpose of this research study was to determine whether the use of a quality character education program in rural elementary schools would have an impact on the overall level of building health. The buildings were matched using demographics from each school to limit extraneous variables in this study.

The characteristics included the number of students, the number of full-time staff, the percentage of free and reduced lunch, years of teaching, ethnicity, and special education. The demographics from each building are shown in the table below:

Characteristics	School A Character Ed	School B Non Character Ed
Number of Students	398	294
Number of Full-time Teachers	23	20
Percentage of Free/Reduced Lunch	38	34
Percentage of Ethnic Minority	8	7
Percentage of Special Education	11	8

Table 1 – Demographic Data of School A (CE) and School B (NCE)

Based on these data the schools were similar enough that these demographics did not constitute any significant intervention in this study.

The results from the administration of the Character Education Quality Standards Survey for both school A (CE) & B (NCE) are reported below:

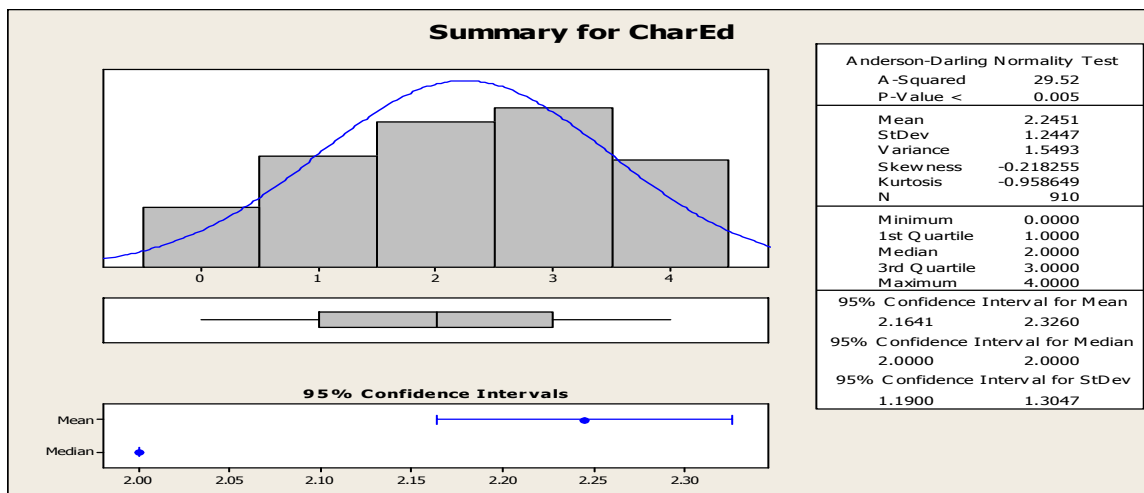


Figure 1- Summary of Survey Data for School A (CE)

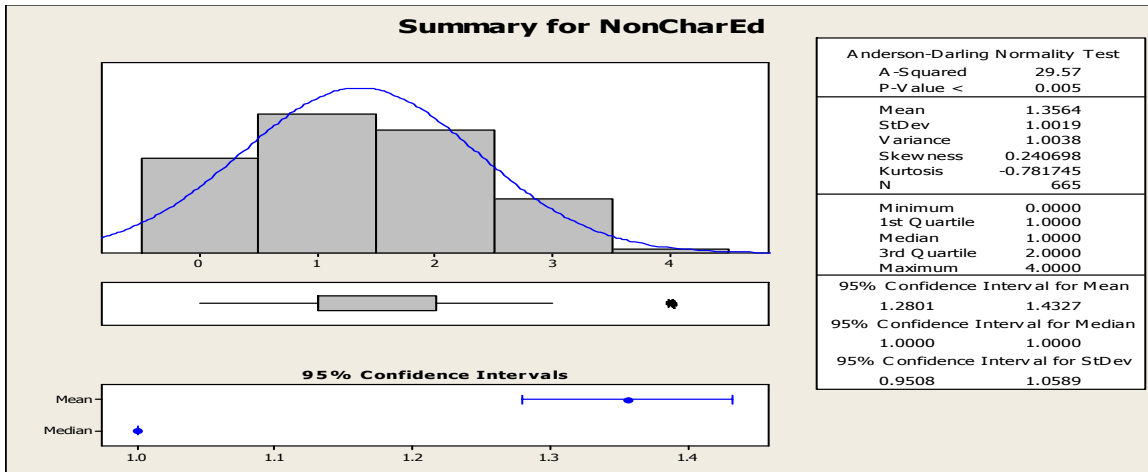


Figure 2 – Summary of Survey Data for School B (NCE)

The summary figures show the total number of teacher responses to the questions relating to the eleven principles of effective character education for each building on the survey. School A (CE) is rated higher than school B (NCE). Further investigation of the specific data collected on each of the principles is recorded in the figures below:

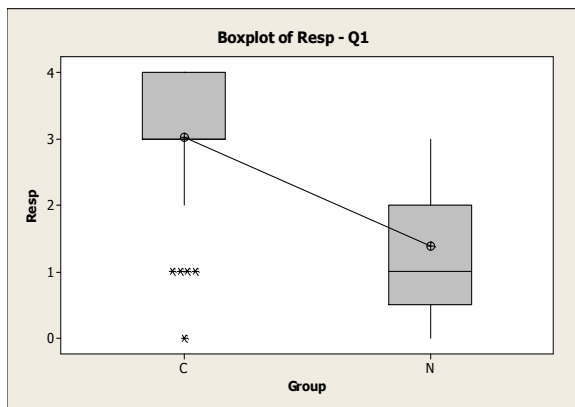


Figure 3: Principle #1

Effective character education promotes core ethical values as well as supportive performance values as the foundation of good character.

Two-sample T for Principle #1

Group	N	Mean	StDev	SE Mean
C	78	3.026	0.882	0.10
N	57	1.39	1.06	0.14

T-Test of difference : T-Value = 9.49 P-Value = 0.000 DF = 106

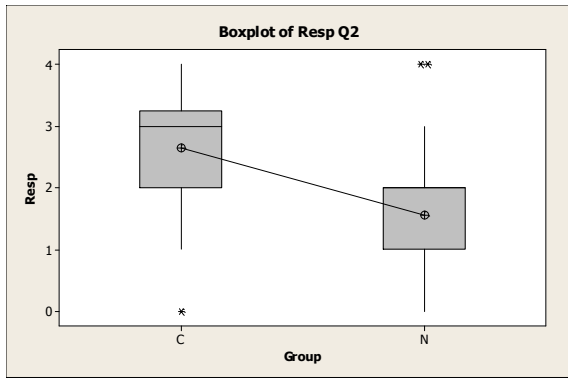


Figure 4: Principle #2

Effective character education defines “character” comprehensively to include thinking, feeling, and behavior.

Two-sample T for Principle #2

Group	N	Mean	StDev	SE Mean
C	78	2.65	1.00	0.11
N	57	1.56	1.12	0.15

T-Test of difference: T-Value = 5.85 P-Value = 0.000 DF = 112

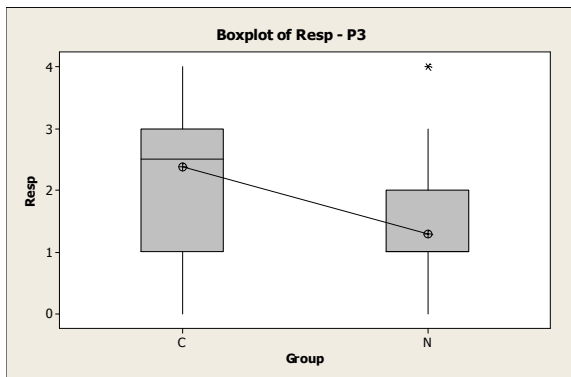


Figure 5: Principle #3

Effective character education uses a comprehensive, intentional, and proactive approach to character development.

Two-sample T for Principle #3

Group	N	Mean	StDev	SE Mean
C	104	2.38	1.18	0.12
N	76	1.29	1.00	0.12

T-Test of difference: T-Value = 6.64 P-Value = 0.000 DF = 174

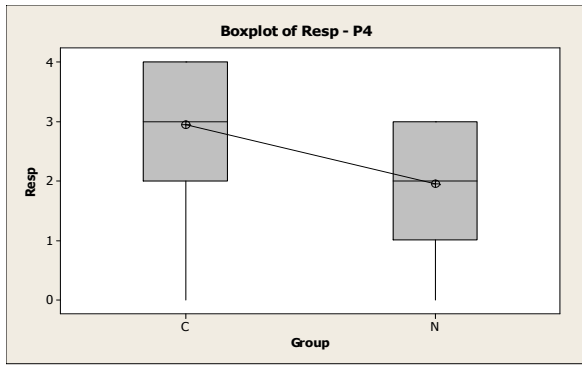


Figure 6: Principle #4

Effective character education creates a caring school community.

Two-sample T for Principle #4

Group	N	Mean	StDev	SE Mean
C	104	2.942	0.993	0.097
N	76	1.961	0.901	0.10

T-Test of difference: T-Value = 6.91 P-Value = 0.000 DF = 169

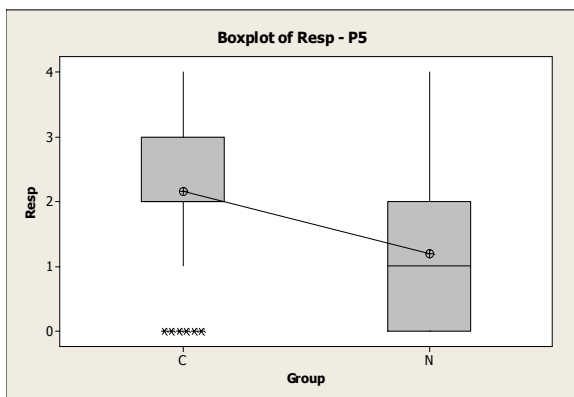


Figure 7: Principle #5

Effective character education provides students with opportunities for moral action.

Two-sample T for Principle #5

Group	N	Mean	StDev	SE Mean
C	78	2.15	1.01	0.11
N	57	1.193	0.953	0.13

T-Test of difference: T-Value = 5.65 P-Value = 0.000 DF = 124

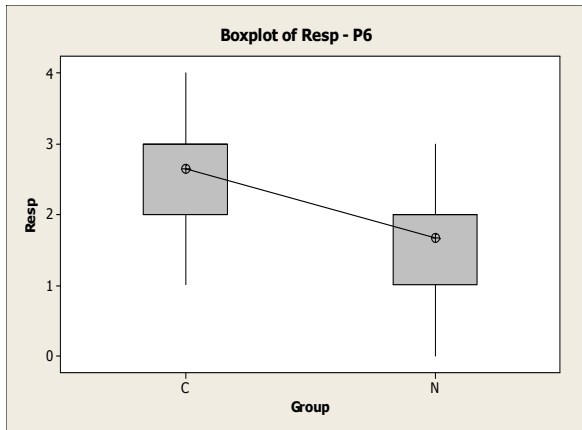


Figure 8: Principle #6

Effective character education includes a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character and helps them succeed.

Two-sample T for Principle #6

Group	N	Mean	StDev	SE Mean
C	78	2.654	0.978	0.11
N	57	1.667	0.787	0.10

T-Test of difference: T-Value = 6.49 P-Value = 0.000 DF = 131

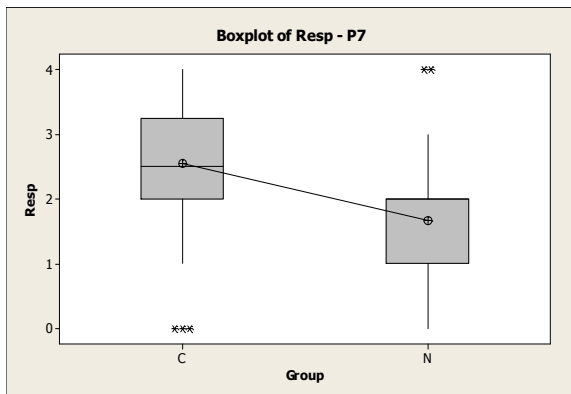


Figure 9: Principle #7

Effective character education strives to develop students' self-motivation.

Two-sample T for Principle #7

Group	N	Mean	StDev	SE Mean
C	78	2.55	1.10	0.12
N	57	1.67	1.06	0.14

T-Test of difference: T-Value = 4.72 P-Value = 0.000 DF = 123

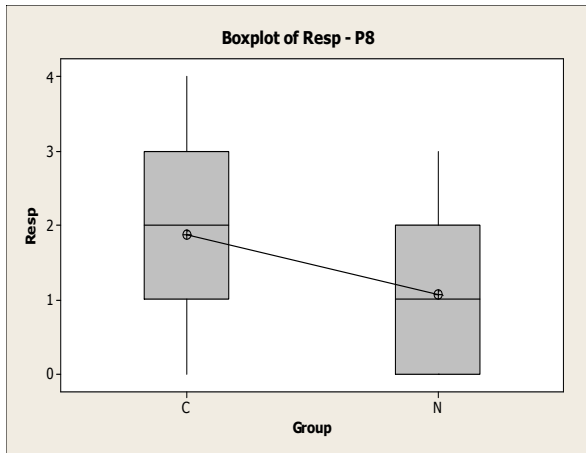


Figure 10: Principle #8

Effective character education engages the school staff as a learning and moral community that shares responsibility for character education and attempts to adhere to the same core values that guide the education of the students.

Two-sample T for Principle #8

Group	N	Mean	StDev	SE Mean
C	78	1.87	1.34	0.15
N	57	1.070	0.979	0.13

T-Test of difference: T-Value = 4.01 P-Value = 0.000 DF = 132

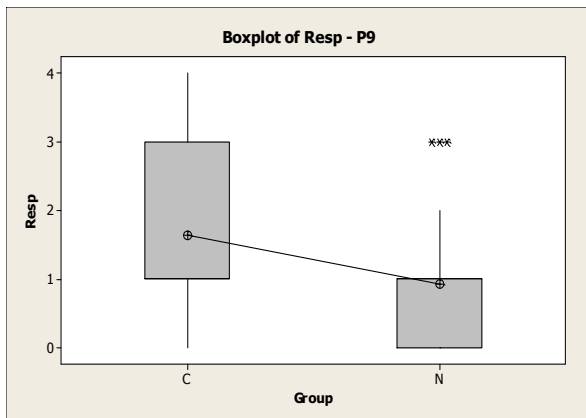


Figure 11: Principle #9

Effective character education fosters shared leadership and long-range support of the character education initiative.

Two-sample T for Principle #9

Group	N	Mean	StDev	SE Mean
C	78	1.64	1.16	0.13
N	57	0.930	0.842	0.11

T-Test of difference: T-Value = 4.12 P-Value = 0.000 DF = 132

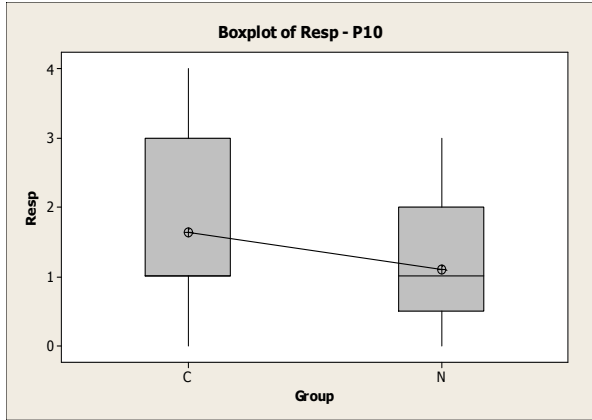


Figure 12: Principle #10
 Effective character education engages families and community members as partners in the character-building effort.

Two-sample T for Principle #10

Group	N	Mean	StDev	SE Mean
C	78	1.64	1.26	0.14
N	57	1.105	0.838	0.11

T-Test of difference: T-Value = 2.97 P-Value = 0.004 DF = 131

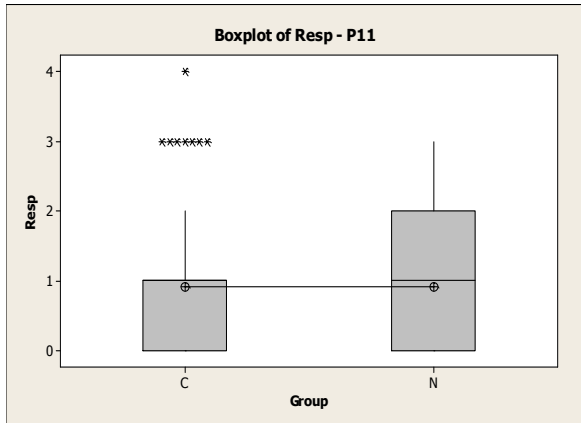


Figure 13: Principle #11
 Effective character education assess the character of the school, the staff's functioning as character educators, and the extent to which students manifest good character.

Two-sample T for Principle #11

Group	N	Mean	StDev	SE Mean
C	78	0.910	0.983	0.11
N	57	0.912	0.872	0.12

T-Test of difference: T-Value = -0.01 P-Value = 0.990 DF = 128

The data analysis of the Character Education Quality Standards Survey indicates a significant difference for all principles except for number eleven. School A (CE), the school

where character education programming is in place reported higher scores on each of the eleven principles. The scores reported by school A (CE) on principles one through ten were different enough in range from the scores reported on the same principles by school B (NCE) to be considered significant.

The results from the administration of the OHI -E Survey for both School A (CE) & B (NCE) are reported below:

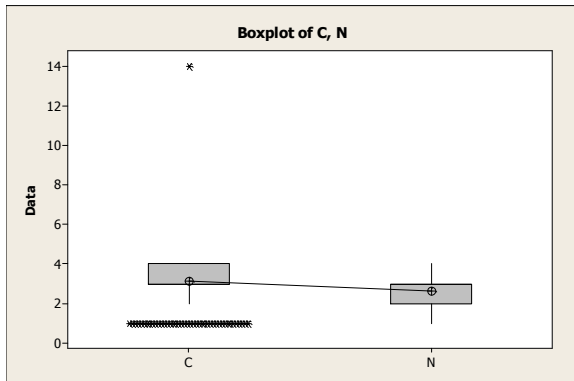


Figure 14: Overall Organizational Health Inventory

Two-sample T Test for Character School A vs Non Character School B

Group	N	Mean	StDev	SE Mean
C	962	3.103	0.926	0.030
N	703	2.647	0.834	0.031

T-Test of difference: T-Value = 10.50 P-Value = 0.000 DF =1592

Further investigation of the data collected for each of the dimensions are recorded below:

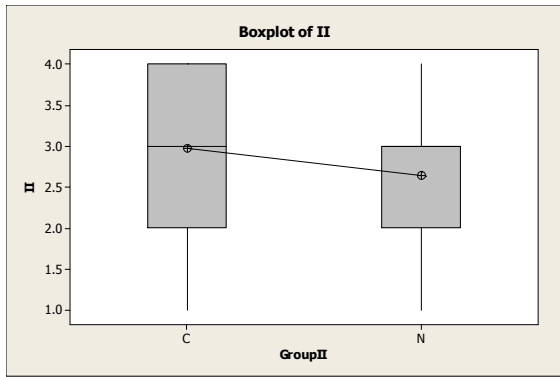


Figure 15: Dimension #1: II – Institutional Integrity

Two-sample T for II

Group	N	Mean	StDev	SE Mean
C	156	2.968	0.774	0.062
N	114	2.640	0.863	0.081

C 156 2.968 0.774 0.062
 N 114 2.640 0.863 0.081

T-Test of difference: T-Value = 3.22 P-Value = 0.001 DF = 227

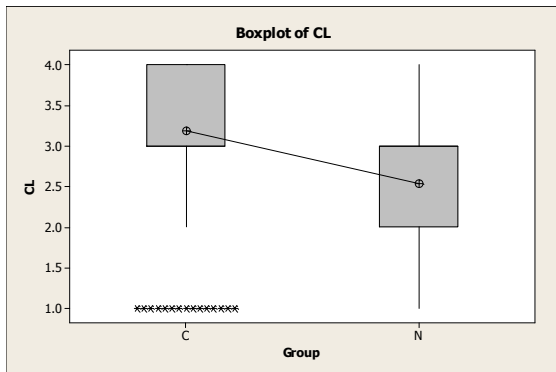


Figure 16: Dimension #2: CL – Collegial Leadership

Two-sample T for CL

Group	N	Mean	StDev	SE Mean
C	260	3.185	0.890	0.055
N	190	2.537	0.871	0.063

C 260 3.185 0.890 0.055
 N 190 2.537 0.871 0.063

T-Test of difference: T-Value = 7.72 P-Value = 0.000 DF = 412

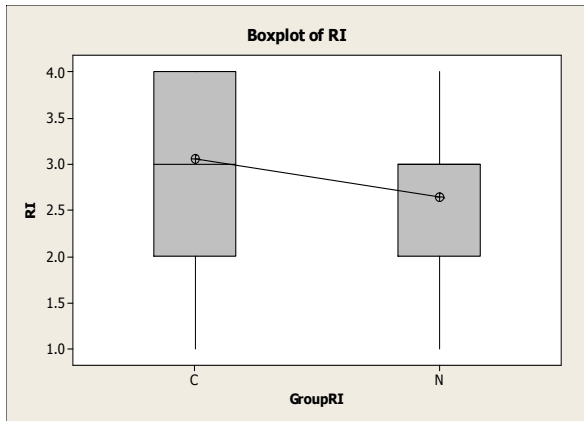


Figure 17: Dimension #3: RI – Resource Influence

Two-sample T for RI

Group RI	N	Mean	StDev	SE Mean
C	182	3.060	0.874	0.065
N	133	2.639	0.721	0.063

T-Test of difference: T-Value = 4.68 P-Value = 0.000 DF = 308

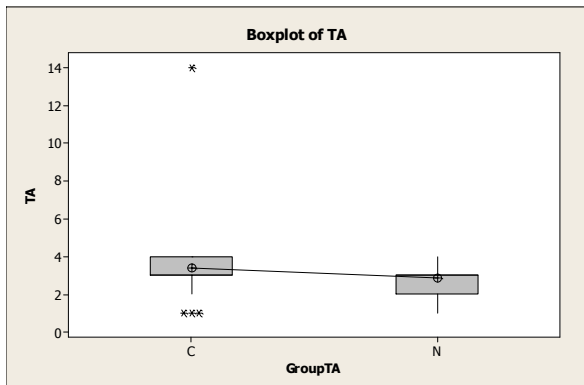


Figure 18: Dimension #4: TA – Teacher Affiliation

Two-sample T for TA

Group TA	N	Mean	StDev	SE Mean
C	234	3.38	1.03	0.067
N	171	2.877	0.828	0.063

T-Test of difference: T-Value = 5.40 P-Value = 0.000 DF = 399

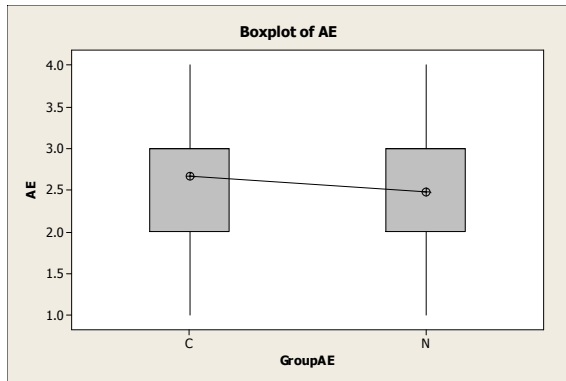


Figure 19: Dimension #5: AE – Academic Emphasis

Two-sample T for AE

Group	AE	N	Mean	StDev	SE Mean
C		130	2.669	0.857	0.075
N		95	2.474	0.810	0.083

T-Test of difference: T-Value = 1.74 P-Value = 0.082 DF = 208

The data analysis of the OHI – E indicates a significant difference in each of the dimensions of building health except for dimension number five, academic emphasis. In the first four dimensions, teachers from school A (CE) reported higher scores than school B (NCE). The greatest difference was reported on dimension number two, collegial leadership. Finally the OHI – E is designed so that an overall health index can be generated for each school. The mean of an "average" school is 500. A score of 650 on the health index represents a very healthy school just as a score of 350 depicts an unhealthy school climate. The following criteria have been created for the interpretation of the health index scores:

Above 600	VERY HIGH
551-600	HIGH
525-550	ABOVE AVERAGE
511-524	SLIGHTLY ABOVE AVERAGE
490-510	AVERAGE
476-489	SLIGHTLY BELOW AVERAGE
450-475	BELOW AVERAGE
400-449	LOW
Below 400	VERY LOW

The table below reports the results of the overall health index comparison for the school in this study:

	School A	School B
Health Index Score	572 (High)	450 (Below Average)

Table 2 – Overall Health Index of School A and School B

Summary

The data reported indicate that the implementation of a character education program at school A (CE) had a positive impact on the building health of the school. The analysis of the Character Education Quality Standards Survey of school A (CE) and school B (NCE) indicated the school A (CE) teachers rated their building at a higher level than those from school B (NCE). This data set the stage for the further investigation of building health as reported on the OHI –E. Scores from this survey were reported higher overall by teachers from school A (CE) than those from school B (NCE). The analysis of the data does indicate evidence that the implementation of a character education program, such as CHARACTER COUNTS! can have a positive effect on the level of building health. The implications of these findings are discussed in the final chapter.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This study sought to answer one research question; does the implementation of a character education program have an effect on school health. It focused on the Character Education Partnerships' Eleven Principles of Character Education. The study sought to examine the health of the schools in the study by analyzing the perceptions teachers had of the overall health of their school. This study also examined the possible link between character education and school health.

This study used two instruments to measure outcomes related to character education and school health. The Character Education Quality Standards Survey measured the level of character education. The Organizational Health Inventory (Elementary) measured the climate of the school health.

Statement of the Problem

This chapter will examine the findings based upon the overarching question: Will implementing character education have an effect on building health? The research hypothesis for this study was stated as: The implementation of a character education program will have an impact on the health of the building. The null hypothesis for this study was stated as: The implementation of a character education program will not have an impact on the health of the building.

Finding and Interpretations

In this study, elementary teachers from two rural mid-sized schools in south central Pennsylvania responded to two surveys, the Character Education Quality Standards survey, and

the Organizational Health Inventory – Elementary. Data was collected and analyzed to form an answer for the research question: Will the implementation of character education have an effect on building health?

This study supported the research hypothesis that the implementation of a character education program will have an effect on building health. The null hypothesis that the implementation of a character education will not have an effect on building health is rejected. Further information regarding the findings of data analysis is provided in the next paragraphs.

The Character Education Quality Standards survey data revealed that school A (CE), the school that has implemented the CHARACTER COUNTS! program scored higher on each of the eleven principles of character except for principle number eleven. Principle number eleven states that effective character education assesses the character of the school, the school staffs functioning as character educators, and the extent to which students manifest good character. Principle eleven is a high standard for any school to reach. The level of difference between each of the building scores on the other ten principles varied for each, but consistently showed at least a slight significant difference between school A (CE) and school B (NCE) when looking at the p value for each two sample *t* test. Teachers from school A (CE) rated their implementation and ongoing use of character education in every principle at a higher level than those teachers from school B (NCE).

The researcher anticipated that the data would indicate that school A (CE) would score higher than school B (NCE). School B (NCE) has not implemented a character education program. This researcher believes that some level of character education is unavoidable by any educator that stands before a group of children. Character education is a natural part of the typical day-to-day interactions of teachers and students. For this reason school B (NCE) teachers

did rate themselves as character educators. Their scores were consistently lower than those of school A (CE).

This researcher believes that scores for school A (CE) may be lower than expected for the reason that these teachers have received in-service and training in the CHARACTER COUNTS! program. They may have developed higher expectations for their character education initiative and rated themselves lower on the scale.

The Character Education Quality Standards survey was used in this study to identify the level of character education programming within each of the schools. The survey, designed by the Character Education Partnership was developed just for that specific purpose. Data reported in Figures 3- 12 consistently shows a significant difference between school A (CE) and school B (NCE) in the principles 1-10 of effective character education. These principles speak to such topics as promoting core values, defining character to include thinking, feeling and acting, using a comprehensive approach, creating a caring community, educating in a challenging way with a meaningful curriculum, developing self motivation, and engaging the entire school staff.

The results from the Organizational Health Inventory – Elementary provided support to accept the research hypothesis. A statistically significant difference was reported in a two-sample *t* test comparing all responses for school A (CE) and school B (NCE), see Figure 14. School A (CE), the school with character education programming reported a higher score than school B (NCE), the school without a character education programming. Further investigation of each specific dimension is reported in the next paragraphs.

The thirty-seven questions found on the OHI – E are subdivided into five different dimensions of organizational health and are defined by Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp in *Open Schools/Healthy Schools - Measuring Organizational Climate* (1991):

- **Institutional Integrity** describes a school that has integrity in its educational program. The school is not vulnerable to narrow, vested interests of community groups; indeed, teachers are protected from unreasonable community and parental demands.
- **Collegial Leadership** refers to behavior by the principal that is friendly, supportive, open, and guided by norms of equality. At the same time, however, the principal sets the tone for high performance by letting people know what is expected of them.
- **Resource Influence** describes the principal's ability to affect the action of superiors to the benefit of teachers. Teachers are given adequate classroom supplies, and extra instructional materials and supplies are easily obtained.
- **Teacher Affiliation** refers to a sense of friendliness and strong affiliation with the school. Teachers feel good about each other and, at the same time, have a sense of accomplishment from their jobs. They are committed to both their students and their colleagues. They find ways to accommodate to the routine, accomplishing their jobs with enthusiasm.
- **Academic Emphasis** refers to the school's press for achievement. The expectation of high achievement is met by students who work hard, are cooperative, seek extra work, and respect other students who get good grades.

Two sample *t* tests were completed on each dimension of the OHI-E comparing the two schools. Data reported in Figures 15 – 18 illustrate a significant difference between school A (CE) and school B (NCE). In each of these four dimensions of organizational health school A (CE) reported higher scores. The greatest difference was noted in dimension two, collegial leadership. No significant difference was found in dimension five, academic emphasis.

This is not surprising given the varied number of academic programs and the current emphasis on standards based education.

Recommendations

Upon completion of this research study, the researcher suggests the following recommendations:

1. Comparisons of other character education programs and their impact on school health may provide valuable information for schools investigating possible implementation.
2. Many teachers believe that teaching values and character development issues are an important part of their responsibility. Some teachers hesitate at times, concerned about “covering” core curriculum. These fears could be addressed in additional studies that may research the effect of academic achievement and the implementation of character education.
3. Much of the research, to date, focuses on elementary and middle school programming. Research on this topic at the secondary level could provide information on sustainability of character education programming.
4. Future research could explore additional areas of school climate, culture, and the impact on implementation of a variety of programs. The success of schools and school systems need to consider that building health be at the forefront of concern for educators.

Conclusions

Societal values have deteriorated in recent times and this change has had an effect on the moral development and ethical behavior of our children (Josephson, 2006). The significant rise in awareness of this phenomenon has spawned a renewed interest in the need to instill traditional values in our children through character education. CHARACTER COUNTS! is one such

program for schools to investigate as they decide whether or not to implement some type of character education program. The current resurgence of teaching for character has become a noteworthy crusade in American schools. Along with efforts at home to develop a child's knowledge and ability to decide right from wrong, the school provides an environment to teach the attributes of character that will restore a strong and stable direction for the future of our society.

Elementary school buildings are unique. Each building, for a variety of reasons, has its own culture, climate and health. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future defines school climate in terms of a learning community and argues that poor school climate is an important factor contributing to many issues with our schools today (Fulton, Yoon, & Lee, 2005). The study of school health and climate completed by the researcher identifies a growing body of research that attests to its importance in a variety of overlapping ways, including social, emotional, intellectual and physical safety; positive youth development, mental health, and healthy relationships; higher graduation rates; school connectedness and engagement; academic achievement; social, emotional and civic learning; teacher retention and effective school reform.

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of a character education program on the health of an elementary school building. More specifically this researcher wanted to investigate the implementation and use of a high quality character education program that is consistent with CEP's eleven principles of effective character education and what impact that might have on the five dimensions of health or climate of the school building as determined by the OHI-E. The findings of this study do support the hypothesis as stated. This study found that character education had a positive impact on the health of the building where it was implemented.

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Appendix A – Character Education Quality Standards

1. Effective character education promotes core ethical values and supportive performance values as the basis of good character.

1.1 The school community has agreed upon or given assent to the core ethical values (or virtues, positive character traits, pillars, principles, or thematic words that form an umbrella for ethical content) it promotes in its character education initiative.

- ❑ Core ethical values encompass significant aspects of moral life.
- ❑ Choice of values is justified (e.g., as important to a democratic society).
- ❑ Plans exist for continuing reflection and discussion.
- ❑ Administrative staff have been involved in identifying and/or giving assent to the values.
- ❑ Teaching staff have been involved in identifying and/or giving assent to the values.
- ❑ A substantial number of parents have been involved in identifying and/or giving assent to the values.
- ❑ Non-teaching staff have been involved in some demonstrable way.
- ❑ Students have been involved in a developmentally appropriate manner.
- ❑ (For districts): A representative group of district staff, school staff, parents, school board members, and community members have been involved in identifying and/or giving assent to the values.

1.2 The school community develops definitions of its core ethical values in terms of intentions and observable behaviors.

- ❑ Intentions describe the underlying meaning or reason for the value, e.g., being “fair” means to be just and equitable in our treatment of others so that no one is favored, disregarded, or mistreated.
- ❑ Intentions and behaviors clearly connect to the core values.
- ❑ Behaviors defining the values are seen as important by members of the school community (including teachers, students, and parents).
- ❑ Behaviors encompass all of the values and are observable inside and outside schools.
- ❑ Definitions are developmentally appropriate to students.
- ❑ Defining core values can be an on-going process and may involve students, staff and parents.

1.3 The school has made deliberate and effective efforts to make its core ethical values, the justification for them, and their behavioral definitions widely known throughout the school and parent community.

- ❑ The school makes continuing efforts to make the core ethical values (including justification and behavioral definitions) known to the entire school community; for example, core values are:
 - a) Incorporated into school mission statement, school handbook, and discipline code.
 - b) Defined at an appropriate developmental level for students.
 - c) Repeatedly referred to by staff in interactions with students and within instructional activities.
 - d) Conveyed to parents through newsletters, at school events, etc.
 - e) Demonstrated to be widely known, as shown by evidence provided by school.

f) Visually displayed in a developmentally appropriate manner.

2. Defines “character” comprehensively to include thinking, feeling, and behavior.

2.1 The school takes deliberate and effective steps to help students acquire a developmentally appropriate understanding of what the core values mean in everyday behavior and grasp the reasons why some behaviors are right and others wrong.

- ❑ Staff consistently and proactively address the logic of moral arguments and why core values are desirable.
- ❑ Student discussion includes the sources of and/or justifications for moral values.

2.2 The school takes deliberate and effective steps to help everyone appreciate the core values, reflect upon them, desire to embody them, and become committed to them.

- ❑ Staff make consistent and proactive efforts to develop in students a deeply felt commitment to core values (*e.g., by developing empathy for others and a sense of responsibility, and through inspirational exemplars in literature, history, sports, the media, etc.*)
- ❑ Staff make strong efforts to meet the needs of students for safety, belonging, and autonomy as these form a foundation for developing a commitment to core values.

2.3 The school takes deliberate and effective steps to help students practice the core values so that they become habitual patterns of behavior.

- ❑ Staff encourage students to examine their behavior in light of core values, and challenge them to make their behavior consistent with their best understanding of and commitment to core values (*e.g., reflection through appropriate use of journal writing, discussion of events in the classroom, adult-child conversations on past or present behavior, etc.*).
- ❑ Students receive practice in and feedback on behavioral skills (*e.g., setting goals, listening attentively, apologizing, etc.*) through the ordinary conduct of the classroom, role plays, cooperative learning groups, and/or other developmentally appropriate activities.

3. Uses a comprehensive, intentional, and proactive approach to character development.

3.1 The school is intentional and proactive in addressing character at all grade levels.

- ❑ Individual teachers, grade level teams, and the staff as a whole participate in strategic planning for character education.
- ❑ (For districts): The district has included character education in its strategic plans (*e.g., mission statement, goals, objectives*).

3.2 Character education is regularly integrated into academic content.

- ❑ Teachers highlight core values embedded in academic subject matter (*e.g., the virtues historical leaders possessed, character-related themes in literature, the principles of scientific investigation*).

- ❑ Teachers provide opportunities for students to address ethical issues that arise within academic subject matter (e.g., whether historical practices were fair and/or just; the ethical considerations of new scientific discoveries, war, social policies and other current events).
- ❑ (For districts:) The district ensures that character education is included in academic curriculum frameworks.

3.3 Character education is a priority in how all classes are conducted.

- ❑ Classroom routines address students' need for belonging, autonomy, and competence.
- ❑ Classroom routines are respectful of students and engage them in ways that develop traits such as responsibility, fairness, and caring.

3.4 Character education is infused throughout the school day to include sports and co-curricular activities; core values are upheld by adults and taken seriously by students throughout the school environment.

- ❑ Expectations and efforts are communicated and practiced at the start of and throughout the school year in all activities (sports, student clubs) and areas of the school (cafeteria, halls, playground, library, school bus, etc.).
- ❑ Members of the school community easily communicate and point to core values in all areas of the school.
- ❑ Character education is manifested consistently across the school setting.

4. Creates a caring school community.

4.1 The school makes it a high priority to foster caring attachments between adults and students.

- ❑ Students perceive staff as caring.
- ❑ Teachers act effectively as counselors in appropriate areas.
- ❑ Faculty typically attend school events.
- ❑ The school makes provision for students and teachers to meet in social settings.
- ❑ Teachers provide time for extra help in academic work.

4.2 The school makes it a high priority to help students form caring attachments to each other.

- ❑ Students perceive the student body as generally friendly and inclusive.
- ❑ Teachers and students create classroom environments in which respect and kindness are the standard.
- ❑ Creating a sense of safety and belonging is clearly given a priority as high as academic objectives.
- ❑ Educational strategies, such as cooperative learning and cross-age mentoring, encourage mutual respect and appreciation of interdependence among students.
- ❑ Teachers and students note caring acts and give compliments when they occur, correct unkind remarks when they occur, etc.
- ❑ The school provides opportunities for positive interactions among students of different classrooms and grade levels.

4.3 The school does not tolerate peer cruelty or any form of violence and takes steps to prevent peer cruelty and violence and deal with it effectively when it occurs.

- ❑ Staff identify and constructively address peer abuse, such as put-downs, racial slurs, insensitive gender remarks, remarks on appearance, economic or social status, etc., in ways that express moral feeling and that address dismay with the behavior (not the child).
- ❑ Staff take specific steps to discourage and deal with bullying through specific processes (e.g., conflict resolution).
- ❑ Incivility toward peers is taken as seriously as such behavior toward adults.
- ❑ Staff make proactive efforts to increase students' understanding of personal, economic, and cultural differences.
- ❑ The school identifies language that is unacceptable and enforces a corresponding code of behaviors.

4.4 The school makes it a high priority to foster caring attachments among adults within the school community.

- ❑ Staff members perceive the work environment as positive.
- ❑ Staff members make efforts to develop caring and respectful relationships among themselves.
- ❑ Staff members make efforts to form positive relationships with students' parents and guardians.
- ❑ (For districts): Staff at the district level make efforts to develop caring and respectful relationships among themselves, with staff at the school level, and in the broader community.

5. Provides students with opportunities for moral action.

5.1 The school sets clear expectations for students to engage in moral action in terms of civility, personal responsibility, good sportsmanship, helping others, and service to school and community.

- ❑ Staff model, endorse, teach, and expect good sportsmanship, civility, compassion, and personal responsibility.
- ❑ There are clear guidelines and expectations regarding community service, service learning, and/or other more programmatic opportunities for moral action.
- ❑ These guidelines and expectations:
 - a) Are clearly articulated and relevant to students.
 - b) Are frequently communicated to and known by relevant stakeholders (students, teachers, and parents).
 - c) Serve as obligations for the students when appropriate (e.g., mandatory recycling, required community service hours, cross-age mentoring activities implemented on a classroom level).
- ❑ (For districts): The district encourages and sets clear guidelines and expectations for community service and/or service learning and other programmatic opportunities for moral action.

5.2 The school provides students with repeated and varied opportunities for engaging in moral action within the school, and the students engage in these opportunities and are positively affected by them.

- The school effectively provides students with opportunities for moral actions within the school by:
 - a) Endorsing and encouraging participation (e.g., in cooperative learning, peer or cross-age tutoring, classroom or student body governance, and service projects or work such as planting and tending a garden, beautifying the school, and helping keep the school clean).
 - b) Providing sufficient opportunities for all students.
 - c) Providing opportunities that are valued and initiated/directed by students.
 - d) Setting aside school time for supporting, engaging in, and individually and collectively reflecting on moral action.
 - e) Explicitly acknowledging student moral action.
- The majority of students take advantage of these opportunities and benefit from them.

5.3 The school provides students with repeated and varied opportunities for engaging in moral action in the larger community, and the students engage in these opportunities and are positively affected by them.

- The school effectively provides students with opportunities for moral actions by:
 - a) Endorsing and encouraging participation in community service work (e.g., working with the elderly, the homeless, or on environmental projects).
 - b) Providing sufficient opportunities for all students
 - c) Providing opportunities that are valued and initiated/directed by students
 - d) Setting aside school time for supporting, engaging in, and individually and collectively reflecting on moral action
 - e) Explicitly acknowledging the positive consequences of community service and other moral actions in the larger community.
- The majority of students take advantage of these opportunities and benefit from them.

6. Includes a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, develops character traits that enhance their capacity to learn, and helps them to succeed.

6.1 The academic curriculum provides meaningful and appropriate challenges to students that promote character development throughout the curriculum.

- The academic curriculum:
 - a) Is engaging and interactive.
 - b) Addresses students' natural interests and questions.
 - c) Increases their sense of competence.
 - d) Emphasizes student autonomy (e.g., student-initiated or self-directed projects).

6.2 The school implements a wide range of strategies to accommodate the diverse cultures, skills, interests, and needs of students.

- The school provides adequate and ongoing staff training in learning styles and provides opportunities for teachers to share best practice in diverse instructional strategies.
- Teachers demonstrate the appropriate use of diverse teaching strategies.
- Staff engage in accurate and ongoing identification of students' learning needs.

- ❑ All students are valued, respected, and helped to excel, regardless of cultural, racial, gender, or socioeconomic differences.
- ❑ Staff take any special challenges stemming from such differences into account when designing and providing instruction.

6.3 Teachers promote the development of character traits that support students' intellectual growth and academic performance.

- ❑ Teachers promote thinking habits (curiosity, truth-seeking, critical thinking, and open-mindedness to new ideas) that lead to intellectual growth in students.
- ❑ Teachers promote work-related habits (perseverance, diligence, self-discipline, and challenge-seeking) that help students perform academically.
- ❑ Teachers promote social habits (honesty, responsibility, collaboration) that help students work together harmoniously (e.g., through cooperative learning and group projects).

7. Strives to develop students' self-motivation.

7.1 The school explicitly values good character for its own sake.

- ❑ The school's statement on character education explicitly includes mention of moral motivation.
- ❑ Students and teachers demonstrate awareness of the importance of intrinsic moral motivation.

7.2 Staff and students recognize and celebrate good character by emphasizing the natural, beneficial consequences of acts of character rather than material recognition (behavior modification rewards, trophies, certificates) and social recognition that encourages extrinsic motivation.

- ❑ Recognition is inclusive of members of the school community (e.g., recognizing the character strengths and unique qualities of each student in a classroom rather than having students *earn* the title "student of the week")
- ❑ The school refrains from excessive singling out of students for good deeds or encouraging competition for recognition among students or classrooms.
- ❑ Staff and students recognize and express gratitude to each other in natural settings as part of the everyday life of the school (hallways, classrooms, playgrounds, meetings).
- ❑ (For districts): Districts use their public relations programs to focus attention on good character education practices.

7.3 The school's approach to behavior management emphasizes core values within constructive discussion, explanation, and consequences.

- ❑ The school provides staff training in developmentally appropriate forms of behavior management.
- ❑ The school discipline code is based on discussion, explanation, and consequences.
- ❑ Consequences are consistent, fair, not physically harmful, and include the parents.
- ❑ Staff routinely deal with behavior issues in ways that encourage induction and self-motivation, offer students opportunities for reparation and moral growth, and do not demean the individual (e.g., positive discipline strategies).

- ❑ Students have a developmentally appropriate role in classroom management and school governance (e.g., participating in: the creation of behavioral norms and rules, class meetings, conflict resolution programs, and student governance bodies such as student court).

8. Engages the school staff as a learning and moral community that shares responsibility for character education and attempts to adhere to the same core values that guide the education of students.

8.1 All school staff are included in planning, receiving staff development for, and carrying out the school-wide character education effort.

- ❑ All staff—administrators, teachers, counselors, and support staff (office assistants, maintenance workers, cafeteria workers, playground and classroom aides)—receive initial training and information on their role in the character education initiative.
- ❑ Administrators, teachers and counselors receive ongoing staff development (e.g., workshops, conferences, standing committees, regular discussion).
- ❑ There is evidence that faculty are substantially involved in implementation.
- ❑ Staff value the sharing of ideas and being a learning and moral community.
- ❑ (For districts): The district builds implementation of character education into the assessment of school principals; in turn, the district encourages/requires principals to evaluate integration of character education into their assessments of teachers, counselors, and administrators.
- ❑ (For districts): The district hires central office personnel (e.g., those responsible for administration, counseling, sports, school-to-work, library/media services) and school principals committed to character education and encourages them to incorporate character education into their work.

8.2 Staff model the core values in their interaction with students and each other, and students perceive that they do.

- ❑ Staff are courteous to students, as students are expected to be to them; other core values should be interpreted in similar ways.
- ❑ Students perceive that staff are modeling the values.
- ❑ Teachers use core values to reflect on their own behaviors and procedures.

8.3 Regular and adequate time is made available for staff planning and reflection in regard to character education.

- ❑ Aspects of the character education initiative appear regularly on the agenda of faculty meetings.
- ❑ Administration provides staff release time for development of promising ideas.
- ❑ (For districts): The district provides regular ongoing staff development in character education and provides funding for substitute teachers so that staff have planning and training time.
- ❑ (For districts): The district stimulates information sharing by providing venues for collaboration among schools; establishing a centralized source of materials, curricula, and other tools; and sponsoring regular conferences/meetings on character education.

9. Fosters shared leadership and long-range support of the character education initiative.

- 9.1 The character education program has leaders, including the school principal, who champion the character education effort.
- ❑ The principal's role is pivotal, but an important part of the role is sharing leadership responsibilities with others (e.g., faculty, parents, students, community members).
 - ❑ Leadership is demonstrated at multiple levels through:
 - a) The articulation of goals and abiding principles.
 - b) Personal example.
 - c) Decisions regarding policies, personnel, and allocation of resources.
 - ❑ Leadership stresses that character is integral to the mission of the school and is not merely an adjunct to that mission.
 - ❑ (For districts): Character education is established as part of the district's vision and is a shared priority of the district board and district superintendent.
- 9.2 There is a leadership group or structure (several linked groups) inclusive of staff, students, and parents that guides the ongoing planning and implementation of the character education program and encourages the involvement of the whole school in character-related activities.
- ❑ The leadership group may be a character education committee or task force, an existing school committee, or the entire staff if the school is small. A leadership structure may link groups that represent staff, students, and parents respectively.
 - ❑ Those who will be affected by particular character-related decisions (e.g., staff, parents, students) have input into those decisions.
 - ❑ The school's regular governing mechanisms assume responsibility for management of character-related policies and plans.
 - ❑ (for districts): There is a leadership group (or structure) that includes district and school staff.
- 9.3 Students are explicitly involved in creating and maintaining a sense of community and in other leadership roles that contribute to the character education effort.
- ❑ Students play an active role in creating and maintaining classroom standards of behavior.
 - ❑ Students carry out responsible roles within the classroom and school community (e.g., classroom monitor, safety patrol, student government, peer mediator).
 - ❑ Character-related leadership opportunities are created for students at various levels (i.e., within small learning groups, in the classroom more generally, in the school at large, and in co-curricular and community service activities).
 - ❑ Leadership roles are valued by the student body.
 - ❑ Students, especially at the secondary level, identify themselves as members of wider communities (state, nation, world) in which they can play positive and contributory roles.

10. Engages families and community members as partners in the character-building effort.

- 10.1 The school engages families in the character education initiative and recruits the help of the wider community.
- ❑ The school provide opportunities for families to become involved in the character education initiative.

- ❑ The school recruits the help of the wider community (e.g., businesses and youth organizations) in promoting character development.
- ❑ (For districts): The district engages a broad spectrum of the community in their character education initiative, with particular focus on involvement of appropriate local government agencies, non-school youth serving organizations, and the business community.

10.2 The school and its faculty regularly exchange communications with parents and guardians, provide suggestions and activities that help them reinforce the core values, and offer workshops and resources on character education and general parenting skills.

- ❑ Communication and connection with home are initiated at many levels (e.g., individual teachers, departments, extracurricular clubs, principal, district office, PTO).
- ❑ A great variety of techniques are used (e.g., report cards, notes, phone calls, newsletters, parent-teacher conferences, group meetings, workshops).
- ❑ Parents and guardians are active contributors to, and participants in, school and classroom events.

11. Assesses the character of the school, the school staff's functioning as character educators, and the extent to which students manifest good character.

11.1 The school staff, in collaboration with the appropriate governance bodies, regularly assess the character of the school as a learning and moral community to determine its degree of success.

- ❑ This assessment is deliberately focused on:
 - a) Progress toward the school's comprehensive definition of character and its character-related objectives.
 - b) How effectively it has implemented its character education plans.
- ❑ Assessment techniques may encompass "rough and ready" as well as sophisticated research approaches.
- ❑ Assessment is based on input from students, faculty, other school staff, and possibly parents as well.
- ❑ Some attempt is made to assess the impact of character education on academic achievement.
- ❑ (For districts): Character education is made a part of school-wide assessments; i.e., assessment of school success is not limited to academic test scores.

11.2 The staff periodically report on their efforts to implement character education, as well as on their growth as character educators.

- ❑ The audiences for this reporting can include students, the full staff, parents, district leaders and policy makers, and relevant community members.
- ❑ Reporting includes structured and informal opportunities to examine and reflect on the data.
- ❑ In-service activities provide staff with a good venue for such exchanges.

- 11.3 The school assesses student progress in developing an understanding of and an emotional attachment and commitment to the qualities of good character; behavior is assessed in ways that reflect core values.
- ❑ Student progress is assessed by a variety of approaches (e.g., a character education assessment on student report cards, student-led parent/teacher conferences).
 - ❑ Students rate importance of core values in their lives and/or complete questionnaires on character-related behaviors.
 - ❑ Staff collect data on school attendance, academic achievement, volunteering, acts of honesty, discipline referrals, fighting, vandalism, drug incidents, and student pregnancies, etc.
 - ❑ Faculty members cooperate to ensure that individual students are getting the best benefits from the overall program and to make changes as appropriate.

Appendix B – Organizational Health Inventory – Elementary (OHI-E)

A healthy school is one in which the institutional, administrative, and teacher levels are in harmony; and the school meets functional needs as it successfully copes with disruptive external forces and directs its energies toward its mission.

Dimensions (Subtests of the OHI-E)

Institutional Integrity describes a school that has integrity in its educational program. The school is not vulnerable to narrow, vested interests of community groups; indeed, teachers are protected from unreasonable community and parental demands.

Collegial Leadership refers to behavior by the principal that is friendly, supportive, open, and guided by norms of equality. At the same time, however, the principal sets the tone for high performance by letting people know what is expected of them.

Resource Influence describes the principal's ability to affect the action of superiors to the benefit of teachers. Teachers are given adequate classroom supplies, and extra instructional materials and supplies are easily obtained.

Teacher Affiliation refers to a sense of friendliness and strong affiliation with the school. Teachers feel good about each other and, at the same time, have a sense of accomplishment from their jobs. They are committed to both their students and their colleagues. They find ways to accommodate to the routine, accomplishing their jobs with enthusiasm.

Academic Emphasis refers to the school's press for achievement. The expectation of high achievement is met by students who work hard, are cooperative, seek extra work, and respect other students who get good grades.

Reliability:

Each of these dimensions was measured by a subtest of the OHI-E. The reliability scores for the scales were relatively high: Institutional Integrity (.90), Collegial Leadership (.95), Resource Influence (.89), Teacher Affiliation (.94), and Academic Emphasis (.87).

Construct Validity:

A factor analysis of several samples of the instrument supports the construct validity of the concept of organizational health (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991; Hoy & Tarter, 1997). In addition, the predictive validity has been supported in other studies. See Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp (1991) for a review of that literature.

Administering the Instrument:

The OHI-E is best administered as part of a faculty meeting. It is important to guarantee the anonymity of the teacher respondent; teachers are not asked to sign the questionnaire and no identifying code is placed on the form. Most teachers do not object to responding to the instrument, which takes less than ten minutes to complete. It is probably advisable to have someone other than the principal in charge of collecting the data. What is important is to create a non-threatening atmosphere where teachers give candid responses.

1. The principal explores all sides of topics and admits that other opinions exist.
2. The principal gets what he or she asks for from superiors.
3. The principal discusses classroom issues with teachers.
4. The principal accepts questions without appearing to snub or quash the teacher.
5. Extra materials are available if requested.
6. Students neglect to complete homework.
7. Students are cooperative during classroom instruction.
8. The school is vulnerable to outside pressures.
9. The principal is able to influence the actions of his or her superiors.
10. The principal treats all faculty members as his or her equal.
11. The principal goes out of his or her way to show appreciation to teachers.
12. Teachers are provided with adequate materials for their classrooms.
13. Teachers in this school like each other.
14. Community demands are accepted even when they are not consistent with the educational program.
15. The principal lets faculty know what is expected of them.
16. Teachers receive necessary classroom supplies.
17. The principal conducts meaningful evaluations.
18. Students respect others who get good grades.
19. Teachers feel pressure from the community.
20. The principal's recommendations are given serious consideration by his or her superiors.
21. The principal maintains definite standards of performance.
22. Supplementary materials are available for classroom use.
23. Teachers exhibit friendliness to each other.
24. Students seek extra work so they can get good grades.
25. Select citizen groups are influential with the board.
26. The principal looks out for the personal welfare of faculty members.
27. Teachers express pride in their school.
28. Teachers identify with the school.
29. The school is open to the whims of the public.
30. A few vocal parents can change school policy.
31. Students try hard to improve on previous work.
32. Teachers accomplish their jobs with enthusiasm.
33. The learning environment is orderly and serious.
34. The principal is friendly and approachable.
35. There is a feeling of trust and confidence among the staff.
36. Teachers show commitment to their students.
37. Teachers are indifferent to each other.



Appendix C – Letter to the Superintendents

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

600 FORBES AVENUE ♦ PITTSBURGH, PA 15282

Robert B. Crider
1315 Alexander Ave
Chambersburg, PA 17201
rbcrider@greencastle.k12.pa.us

Dear Superintendent:

I am in the process of completing a dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Ed.D. in Educational Leadership at Duquesne University. The focus of my study examines the possible relationship between character education programming and building climate.

To begin this process, I am asking for your permission to work directly with the principal, and the faculty of the (School District).

Teachers' participation in this study will include the completion of two brief survey instruments:

1. The Character Education Quality Standards questionnaire. A detailed description of this questionnaire can be found at http://www.character.org/uploads/PDFs/Pub_Quality_Standards_.pdf.
2. The Organizational Health Inventory (OHI-E). A detailed description of this survey instrument can be found at <http://www.waynehoy.com/ohi-e.html>.

Scores from the Character Education Quality Standards will be used to investigate the level of character education program within the elementary building. This data will lend support to whether or not the program was implemented correctly, was positively supported, and carried out effectively. Scores from the OHI-E will be used to assess school health. The data analysis from these two instruments will indicate whether or not school health is effected by the implementation of a character education program.

I will need written permission from you in order to proceed with this research.

If you are willing to have your district participate, please provide written documentation declaring your permission has been granted and return it to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided. You may retain a copy for your records. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. All of my contact information is included below.

Sincerely,

Robert Crider
Principal Investigator
1315 Alexander Ave
Chambersburg, Pa 17201
(717) 264-3025
crider@comcast.net

Dr. James Henderso
Dissertation Committee Chair
Duquesne University
405 Canevin Hall
600 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15282-0502



Appendix – D – Teacher Consent Form

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

600 FORBES AVENUE ♦ PITTSBURGH, PA 15282

TITLE: CHARACTER EDUCATION: A RELATIONSHIP WITH SCHOOL HEALTH

INVESTIGATOR: Robert B Crider
1315 Alexander Ave
Chambersburg, PA 17201

ADVISOR: (if applicable): Dr. James E. Henderson
IDPEL Program Director
Department of Foundations and Leadership

SOURCE OF SUPPORT: This study is being performed as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Education in the Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program for Educational Leaders (IDPEL) at Duquesne University.

PURPOSE: You are being asked to participate in a research project that seeks to investigate the possible effects of character education programming on school health. With voluntary consent, you will be invited to complete two separate surveys.

The first survey is the Character Education Quality Standards Checklist. The second survey is The Organizational Health Inventory.

Each paper pencil survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes for you to complete. The surveys will be numerically identified for the purpose of linking them for analysis. The researcher will administer the surveys at a regularly scheduled faculty meeting. Building level principal and other administration will not be present during the completion of the surveys.

These are the only requests that will be made of you.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: There are no risks greater than those encountered in everyday life. Benefits of the study include a detailed description of the possible positive impact on school health by the implementation of a character education program. There is tremendous interest from school districts regarding creating a positive school climate. This studies detailed account may provide school districts information that may inform their own implementation efforts.

COMPENSATION: There will be no compensation given for your participation in this project. However, participation in the project will require no monetary cost to you.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your name will never appear on any survey or research instruments. No identity will be made in the data analysis. All written materials and

consent forms will be stored in a locked file in the researcher's home. Once surveys have been completed for a school they will not be able to be traced back to an individual.

Your response(s) will only appear in statistical data summaries. All materials will be destroyed at the completion of the research. Raw data collected will be maintained in a locked file in the researchers home for a period of five years.

In no way will either your decision to participate or not and/or your answers be communicated with your principal or any other member of your school district. There will be no impact to your teacher evaluation.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW:

You are under no obligation to participate in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time prior to completion of the survey. No identifiers will be used with surveys and it will be impossible to remove your specific data at a later date.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS:

A summary of the results of this research will be supplied to you, at no cost, upon request.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT:

I have read the above statements and understand what is being requested of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason. On these terms, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project.

I understand that should I have any further questions about my participation in this study, I may call:

Robert B. Crider
Director of Educational Operations
Greencastle-Antrim School District
(717) 264-3025

Dr. James E. Henderson
IDEL Program Director
Department of Foundations and Leadership
(412) 396-4880

Dr. Joseph Kush
Chair of the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board
(412) 396-6326

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

