To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Justin Wiebers entitled “An Evaluation of CHARACTER COUNTS!$_{SM}$ Character Education Activities in Relationship to the Behavior of Elementary School Children in Sullivan County Tennessee.” I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Science with a major in Agricultural Extension Education.

Randol G. Waters
Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Dr. Rich Polling

Martha Jo Tolley

Peggy Adkins

Accepted for the Council:

Dr. Anne Mayhew

Interim Vice Provost and
Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file in the Graduate Student Services Office.)

AN EVALUATION OF CHARACTER COUNTS! SM
CHARACTER EDUCATION ACTIVITIES IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE BEHAVIOR OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN SULLIVAN COUNTY, TENNESSEE

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Science
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Justin A. Wiebers
August 2001

Dedication

I wish to dedicate this study to the woman who is both my best friend and my wife; Kristey. Thank you for all the times we've worked together as presenters for CHARACTER COUNTS! programs. You've helped me so much on this research process as my encourager, my classmate, my editor, my secretary, and my counselor.

I am proud to have you as my faithful, life's companion and look forward to accomplishing many more of our goals together. Thank You!

I also wish to dedicate this study to those who dedicate their lives, through careers or volunteering, to helping young people develop to their fullest potential. Parents, teachers, 4-H Agents and many others share in this vital role of preparing our youth to have strong moral character so they can meet personal and public challenges with confidence.

I hope this study assists you with your efforts to instill positive values in the next generation. Your work is important!

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the following individuals for their assistance in developing this research project: Peggy Adkins for her contagious enthusiasm for CHARACTER COUNTS! as well as her depth of knowledge and understanding of the program; Dr. Randol Waters for his strong support, encouragement, and guidance in every step of developing this study; Dr. Rich Poling for his help in developing the survey instrument and encouraging sound research principles; Martha Jo Tolley for her support and encouragement to develop practical applications of this study and it's findings.

Thanks to Peggy Adkins, Johnny Arceneaux, Kelly Coggsdale, Herb Gould, Donald Hammatt, Carrie Marchant, Becky Murray, and Judy Taylor for their assistance in developing the survey instrument. I also want to express my appreciation to Linda Hyder and the teachers and administrators at Jones Cove Elementary, Northview Elementary, and Pigeon Forge Primary for helping pilot the survey instrument.

I wish to thank the Bristol Tennessee City, Kingsport City, and the Sullivan County school systems for their willingness to participate in this survey. I also appreciate every educator and administrator who shared his or her busy time at the end of the school year to complete the survey.

CHARACTER COUNTS! is a service mark of the CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition, a project of the Josephson Institute of Ethics. Permission to reprint the Aspen Declaration and use the CHARACTER COUNTS! service mark has been granted for this study by the Josephson Institute of Ethics.

Thanks to The Character Education Partnership for their permission to reprint the Eleven Principles of Character Education.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the correlation between schools' level of involvement in CHARACTER COUNTS! activities and the desired behaviors of elementary school students in Sullivan County, Tennessee. General perceptions of educators and administrators about the CHARACTER COUNTS! program were collected from 328 respondents from 27 public elementary schools, and a profile of school involvement in CHARACTER COUNTS! activities was developed for schools with the best student behavior.

While it cannot be stated that CHARACTER COUNTS! caused changes in behavior, this study revealed a substantial positive correlation (P=.64) between school involvement in CHARACTER COUNTS! activities and desired student behaviors perceived by elementary school educators and administrators.

Findings also revealed that 95.2% of respondents agreed (38.3%) or strongly agreed (56.9%) that character education is an important part of their work, and more than 80% of respondents believe CHARACTER COUNTS! is an effective program. Respondents also agreed (35.3%) or strongly agreed (4.4%) with the statement, "I have fewer discipline problems because of CHARACTER COUNTS!."

Recommendations for primary strategies for school efforts in developing a CHARACTER COUNTS! program are provided as well as recommendations for further research.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 ..... **1**
Introduction 1
Need for the Study 3
Purpose of the Study 6
Limitations of the Study 6
Definition of Terms 7

Chapter 2 ..... **9**
Review of Literature 9
Historical Perspective 9
Recent Documents 9
Models for Imparting Values 10
Accountability in Education 13
Assessment Considerations 14
Previous Research in Character Education 15

Chapter 3 ..... **18**
Methodology 18
Population 18
Instrument Design 18
Demographic Information 19
"Your School's Involvement" 20
"Your Involvement" 22
"Your Students" 22
Data Collection 23
Analysis of Data 24
School Involvement Profile 27

Chapter 4 ..... **28**
Findings 28
Objective 1 28
Objective 2 30
Objective 3 31
Objective 4 31
Objective 5 38

Chapter 5 ..... **43**
Summary, Significant Findings, and Recommendations 43
Summary 43
Significant Findings 46
School Involvement Profile 49
Recommendations for Further Study 50

Table of Contents (Continued)

Bibliography **52**

Appendices **56**

Appendix A Aspen Declaration of Character Education 57
Appendix B Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education 59
Appendix C Survey Instrument and Cover Letters 61
Appendix D Cover Letter and Questionnaire Sent to Panel Members 71
Appendix E Cover Letters and Pilot Survey Instrument 78
Appendix F Letters Requesting Permission from School Systems 90

Vita **92**

List of Tables

Table 1.	Weights for School Involvement Variables, and Highest Possible Scores for Weighted School Involvement Variables.	21
Table 2.	Respondent Perceptions of CHARACTER COUNTS!	29
Table 3.	School Involvement Index Scores	32
Table 4	Representative Questions Regarding Student Behavior with Responses from All Respondents as compared to Respondents from the Top Three Schools Based on School Involvement Scores.	33
Table 5	Student Behavior Index Scores	36
Table 6	Correlations of School Involvement Index Scores with Student Behavior Index Scores and Individual Variables Comprising the Behavior Index Scores	39
Table 7.	Involvement Profile of top three schools based on Student Behavior Index Scores	40

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"To educate a person in the mind and not in the morals is to create a menace to society."

-Theodore Roosevelt

Cooperative Extension work with youth began in the early 1900's as a means of reaching farm families to teach improved agricultural and home economics practices. As this youth work continued, it became known as 4-H club work, and the skills it imparted began to encompass more than agricultural or home economics related areas. In "The 4-H Handbook" (1952 pp. 2-3), H.A. Willman emphasized the importance of a "well-rounded experience" for developing boys and girls "into the best people possible."

In 1983, a national 4-H needs assessment was conducted with representation from the Extension Service, USDA, National 4-H Council, North Carolina State University, and the assistance of state 4-H leaders. They reported that "youth need effective educational programs to help them acquire the life skills and knowledge necessary to grow and succeed in a rapidly changing society." They explained that 4-H could provide opportunities for young people to develop positive self-images, learn respect and get along with people, to develop and practice responsible environmental skills, and to learn and use accepted practices for mental, physical, emotional and social

health. (Rasmussen, 1989, pp.176). Another description of 4-H work by Wessel and Wessel (1982) states… "the mission of 4-H is to assist youth in acquiring knowledge, developing life skills, and forming attitudes that will enable them to become self directing, productive and contributing members of society." (pp. 331)

In 2000, The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service stated its mission for working with youth as follows: "The mission of Tennessee 4-H is to provide research-based Extension educational experiences that will stimulate young people to gain knowledge, develop life skills and form positive attitudes to prepare them to become capable, responsible and compassionate adults."

Throughout its existence, Extension has proven its commitment to help youth develop good character through the wide variety of educational opportunities offered through 4-H. Many projects and activities are designed to directly contribute to the formation of participants' values. Animal projects are designed to teach responsibility while other projects such as: Leadership, Citizenship, and Personal Development promote values including: respect, fairness, and caring.

The Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service is also committed to character development. Training and support materials have been provided for 4-H agents using the CHARACTER COUNTS! framework; in which educators teach, enforce, advocate, and model six values including: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship.

The Tennessee 4-H Foundation is a member of the National CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition, as are many counties, including Sullivan County, Tennessee. Extension Agents have provided training for teachers and administrators to help implement CHARACTER COUNTS! in public and private schools.

As these new programs are developed and implemented, there is a strong need to evaluate their effectiveness in accomplishing the designed objective to justify the investment of individual and organizational time and resources.

Need for the Study

In 1997, the Tennessee Legislature mandated the introduction of character education into schools through the following revisions to the Tennessee code:

> The course of instruction in all public schools shall include character education to help each student develop positive values and improve student conduct as students learn to act in harmony with their positive values and learn to become good citizens in their school, community and society.
>
> Instruction in character education shall include obedience to the law, sobriety, honesty, truthfulness, the work ethic, financial self-support, respect for the family and marriage, respect for authority, and the common duties and obligations necessary to ensure and promote an orderly, lawful, moral and civil society, thereby enhancing the collective security and well-being.

As in any educational endeavor, simply providing instruction does not ensure the students will learn the desired information or adopt the desired behaviors. To be truly effective, programs must be implemented that encourage positive changes in student behavior. Thomas Lickona, (1991) in "Educating for Character," explains character in three interrelated parts of moral knowing, moral feeling and moral behavior. He goes on to say, "Good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good."

All education teaches character–directly or indirectly through the actions and reactions of the teacher. In "A Primer for Evaluating a Character Education Initiative," Berkowitz emphasizes, "if you are educating children, you are a character educator.

You are definitely influencing, for good or bad, the character of the children you educate." It is important then to have a deliberate and effective system for teaching good character.

Emphasizing the importance of finding effective character education, there are alarming statistics about the moral decline of today's young people. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, the number of arrests per 1,000 youth 14 to 17 years of age in 1950 was 4.1. By 1993 that number had jumped to 130.3. The Center did note that, "Some fluctuations in arrest rates are caused by changes in response rates of law enforcement agencies." However, even allowing for fluctuations, these numbers suggest that young people are increasingly involved in illegal situations.

Business and industry also have interests in the character of the young people who will make up the future workforce. The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills from the United States Department of Labor issued a report in 1991 entitled "What Work Requires of Schools." The report identified several personal qualities as part of a foundation for solid career performance. Qualities included: responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and honesty/integrity.

Michael Josephson, the founder and president of the Joseph and Edna Josephson Institute of Ethics was also concerned about the need for values education in young people. In 1992, he gathered a diverse group of leading educators, ethicists, and youth service professionals to identify common, core ethical values that could be promoted and taught by all people and organizations regardless of political beliefs, religious views, race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status (Josephson Institute of Ethics, 1997).

This group crafted a document called the Aspen Declaration (Appendix A) in which they identified their assumptions about character education, and identified six

core, universal values or “Pillars of Character” including: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. The resulting not-for-profit CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition, a project of the Josephson Institute of Ethics, involves more than 400 national and regional youth serving organizations that represent more than 55 million young people. Local coalitions work with the national organization to help communities and individuals teach, enforce, advocate and model the “Six Pillars of Character” with their own creative resources, and with resources available from the national coalition. (Josephson Institute of Ethics, 1997).

One CHARACTER COUNTS! resource is the “Exercising Character” curriculum developed by Peggy Adkins (Josephson Institute of Ethics, 1995). It is designed for teens to use with four-years-old through teen audiences. Adults and teens use this curriculum in schools, faith communities, and youth organizations such as 4-H. Five different age levels are available with simple lesson plans on trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, citizenship, and decision making.

Within the CHARACTER COUNTS! framework, organizations, agencies, businesses, schools, individuals, and educators are encouraged to create (or adapt) and conduct educational, reinforcement and recognition activities appropriate to their educational setting. This allows educators to incorporate the teaching of the “Six Pillars of Character” into their existing curricula, policies, rules, activities and events. Peggy Adkins (2001) stated… “The goal of CHARACTER COUNTS! is to integrate trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship purposely, pervasively, repetitively, concretely, consistently, and creatively into the community culture and the school culture.”

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the correlation between schools' level of involvement in CHARACTER COUNTS! activities and the behavior of students. It is expected by the researcher that as school involvement increases, student behavior will improve.

Findings from the study will be used to make recommendations for future character education efforts, including adaptations, use of curriculum materials, and other activities.

Specific objectives of this study were to:

1.) Describe respondents demographically and to report their general perceptions about the CHARACTER COUNTS! program.

2.) Establish and utilize criteria for measuring school involvement in teaching and enforcing the CHARACTER COUNTS! Six Pillars of Character.

3.) Record educator and administrator perceptions of student behavior related to the CHARACTER COUNTS! framework.

4.) Examine the correlation between school involvement in teaching and enforcing the CHARACTER COUNTS! Six Pillars of Character and the behavior of elementary school students.

5.) Develop a profile of school involvement in CHARACTER COUNTS! activities for the top three schools based on student behavior scores.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations of this study are listed below:

1) Although a considerable attempt was made to assess the validity of the instrument used in this study, there was no attempt to assess the reliability.

2) Some of the assumptions of scales of measure with regard to index development were violated. For example, some questions had a range of answers from 0 to 7 while some were “Yes” or “No.”

3) Data reported in this study were perception data. Although there are more concrete methods of measuring student behavior, teacher perceptions were deemed acceptable for this study.

4.) Accuracy of conclusions drawn were limited to the accuracy of the respondents answering each question.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are utilized in this manuscript and are defined below for the purposes of this study.

Behavior: knowledge and conduct

CHARACTER COUNTS!: A character education framework for imparting the values of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. “CHARACTER COUNTS!” is a service mark of the National CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition, and is required to be written in all capitol letters and include the exclamation mark.

Character Education: A model for imparting specific values, considered desirable,

Framework: A basic structure or outline on which a program can be developed.

Involvement: Efforts to teach, enforce, advocate or model

Program: An organized, purposeful effort to conduct related activities.

Pervasive: The extent to which a concept or program has spread throughout an organization or community.

School Involvement Scores: A numeric index calculated for individual schools based on efforts to teach, enforce the CHARACTER COUNTS! Six Pillars of Character

Six Pillars of Character: Term used to refer to the core universal values identified in the Aspen Declaration including: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship.

Student Behavior Scores: A numeric index calculated for individual schools based on respondent perceptions of students' knowledge and conduct related to the CHARACTER COUNTS! framework.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Historical Perspective

The issue of teaching values is probably as old as education itself. In the New International Version of the Bible book of Deuteronomy, written around 1407 B.C., reference is made to teaching of the Ten Commandments saying, “Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”

Ivor Pritchard (1988) refers to Aristotle’s views on character formation being the responsibility of legislators, parents and friends as well as individuals themselves. Aristotle also believed character, once formed, to be difficult to alter. He compared it to throwing a rock, saying, we can only control its direction at the outset.

Recent Documents

Several documents have also been drafted in recent years reaffirming the importance of imparting positive values. The “Character Education Manifesto” created in 1996 by the Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character and signed by several state governors and leading educators, the “Aspen Declaration” sponsored by the Josephson Institute of Ethics and written in 1992 at a conference of educators, ethicists, and nonprofit leaders, and the “Eleven Principals of Effective Character Education”

written by Lickona, Schaps, and Lewis for The Character Education Partnership are only a few of the most prominent documents advocating the teaching of values.

Models for Imparting Values

While much is written about the need for young people to develop positive values, there is also a variety of models for imparting values. Each has positive and negative attributes. One article of consideration is autonomy versus indoctrination. In models promoting autonomy, the facilitator presents values without advocating any particular value over another and the individual is responsible for analyzing, selecting and acting on chosen values. Indoctrination based models directly present specific values that are encouraged regardless of the individual's comprehension of the value (Irwin 1988, Pritchard 1988).

A variety of models exist for teaching values. Three of the most prominent models, including character education, are described to provide a better understanding of each model.

Values clarification models achieved considerable popularity in the 1970s (Lockwood 1997 pp. 6). The goal of these models was to help students clarify their personal values and act on them consistently. Activities and questions were designed to encourage students to discuss their values. Teachers who led the discussions were to remain neutral in discussions and not influence students' "value positions" (Lickona, 1991).

While values clarification would be high on the scale of autonomy, it is perhaps too much so for younger children. Wynne (1995) explains that the approach assumes students already have appropriate values and the task is for teachers to help students simply clarify them. This could be difficult especially for younger children who are not

yet confident or experienced enough to set their own standards or have limited decision-making abilities. This nonjudgmental approach to moral education has been relatively discredited (Wynne 1995).

Lawrence Kohlberg's Moral Development Approach, another highly autonomous model, relies on the stimulation of moral reasoning (Wright and Williams 1977, Lickona 1991). Students progress through six stages of moral reasoning including: "Obedience and Punishment," where the student obeys out of fear, not respect for values; "Back-scratching," where the student engages in reciprocity expecting rewards for favors; "Approval of Others," where the student acts in conformity with the expectations of peer groups and parents; "Law and Order," where doing one's duty and rules take precedence over personal values; "Social/ legalistic contracts," where the student looks to the rights of the individual as agreed upon by society; and "Over-riding or general principles," where the student makes decisions based upon conscience compatible with self-selected principles of justice and will contest the laws of society if these conflict with his own (Irwin 1988).

The basic procedure involves dilemmas that are discussed with solutions generated and reasons for solutions debated. When students at one stage are exposed to arguments at the next higher stage, they will presumably be stimulated to think at the higher level (Wright and Williams 1977). Many current character educators object to Kohlberg's Moral Development Approach pointing out that moral dilemmas are artificial, contrived and ultimately useless to students in real life situations (Lockwood, 1997).

Character education models for imparting values are based on indoctrination. Antis (1997) defined character education as "an approach to the teaching of specific attributes related to values and founded on the proposition that upright standards of behavior and good qualities of character are desirable, objectively knowable, and able to

be instilled in children." Antis goes on to describe character education as… "a process of training a person to engage in conduct that is based on moral values derived from law and tradition. It concerns communicating cultural traditions that lead to personal maturation." Wright (1977) labeled this approach "inculcation" and explained it as a way of instilling in students certain values that are considered desirable.

In a basic character education model, educators select specific values; teach the concepts of the values to the students; and reinforce the values through rules, rewards and other activities.

The developmental levels of youth as identified in the Iowa State University Extension publication, Youth Learning Characteristics (Query and Berkland), should influence the type of character education activity being conducted. Since younger children generally think in concrete terms and are not yet ready to set their own standards, activities should be very specific about the values being taught and easily applicable to real life situations. Adolescents are who are reaching higher levels of abstract thinking and are beginning to develop their personal philosophies so discussions of values and activities with broader applications could be utilized.

The CHARACTER COUNTS! character education model prescribes six core universal values or "Six Pillars of Character" including: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship (1997). The model also encourages the process to involve: teaching, enforcing, advocating, and modeling in a manner described as purposeful, pervasive, repetitive, concrete, consistent and creative (Adkins 2001).

Accountability in Education

Whatever the model used, the teaching of values must prove to be effective to warrant the efforts and resources involved in developing and conducting an educational program. Students can be taught to memorize the CHARACTER COUNTS! Six Pillars of Character, but if they do not consistently put the values to practice in their lives, the program is not truly effective. Pritchard (1988) writes that "genuine learning involves not just the acquisition of moral beliefs and habits but also knowing why it is right to have them." Wynne (1995) states that the connection between replies to hypothetical situations and students' practical displays of virtue is low or nonexistent.

The application of character education can be more easily understood when applied to Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning. His classification for levels of intellectual behavior encompasses three overlapping domains: the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. Within the cognitive domain, Bloom identified six levels of thinking, or learning, ranging from the concrete to the abstract. At lower levels, learners merely recall facts or ideas. As learning becomes more complex, learners move through the levels of knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

At the lowest levels of cognitive learning, students involved in character education are only able to list and define the values being taught. As they develop a deeper understanding of the values, they will be able to solve ethical problems in their lives and ultimately assess or evaluate the values being taught.

As students begin to accept and support the values being taught through a character education model, their behaviors will be measurable in Bloom's affective learning domain. In this domain, student behaviors will indicate awareness, attitudes, and interest in the values taught.

Assessment Considerations

The discrepancy between students' knowledge and students' practices has strong implications for researchers. Prichard (1988) states that, "even those who report the right moral convictions may fail to display good character." Thomas (1991) believes "assessment of character education should use a variety of techniques, including rich full descriptions of situations and interactions in addition to number counts and tallies of particular actions."

The Hawthorne effect is also a consideration when evaluating the effect of values education programs. Subjects' knowledge of participation in the experiment, awareness of the hypothesis, and any extra attention, improves their performance (Gall, Borg and Gall 1996). In a study of core ethical values, the Hawthorne effect may seem desirable, but the benefit to the students would be short term and the findings from the study would be difficult to generalize to other populations.

In "A Primer for Evaluating a Character Education Initiative," written for The Character Education Partnership, Berkowitz (1997) stresses the importance of knowing what is to be measured. He points out that program evaluation has two major categories; process evaluation where implementation efforts are analyzed, and outcome evaluation where the effects of the initiative are analyzed. Program evaluation can involve either or both components. Berkowitz reminds researchers that… "studying the process of character education alone will not tell you what impact your efforts had, and studying outcomes alone may not tell you why you did or didn't find positive results." He goes on to explain, "Outcomes may vary due to differences in how and how well a program was implemented."

Berkowitz also discusses reasons for evaluating a character education initiative. He explains that many educators are looking for proof their efforts are effective. He

explains, “Scientific studies never prove an effect. They simply provide evidence to support the conclusion that the intervention was or was not effective.” Berkowitz also warns researchers and educators to be prepared for the research results. If the evidence suggests implementation efforts are ineffective, the character education program may need to be modified or potential flaws in the research design should be considered.

Previous Research in Character Education

In his study of the Heartwood curriculum, Antis (1997) evaluated the program’s effect on the ethical understanding, ethical sensibility, and ethical behavior of elementary aged children. He also studied teacher and parent perceptions about teaching character and character-related behavior of children. Using both qualitative and quantitative research methods and analysis, Antis studied two elementary schools in rural western Pennsylvania. To collect data for the study, a pre- and post-test Character Assessment Inventory was utilized to measure students’ cognitive, affective and behavioral domains related to the character traits to be studied. Teacher surveys, observational data, teacher/student focus groups, parent surveys, and behavioral rating forms were also utilized.

The evaluation of the Heartwood curriculum revealed significant cognitive improvements related to student understanding of the attributes of: respect, love, hope, loyalty, honesty, justice and courage. Significant improvements were also shown in student attitudes related to character specific behaviors consistent with the goals of the Heartwood curriculum.

Antis recommended further research into the transfer of cognitive knowledge of character traits to action and behavior. He also recommended further study into the

effects of character education programs on academic achievement and attendance related outcomes.

The Positive Action Program is a commercially available curriculum for comprehensive school reform. It teaches positive values utilizing a model illustrating how individuals' thoughts lead to actions, and those actions lead to feelings or self-concept, which in turn leads to more thoughts. This cyclical concept can be positive or negative. The Positive Action program seeks to involve individuals, families, schools and communities in a "systematic approach to character development that integrates every part of the school program" (Positive Action Company, 1998).

Various evaluations of the Positive Action program have reported outcome variables of: achievement scores, school attendance, disciplinary actions, self-concept, life-adjustment skills, levels of parent involvement, and levels of program implementation.

The Positive Action Company reports positive changes in school systems that have implemented the Positive Action program. Through various scientific and nonscientific studies, surveys, and anecdotal reports, Positive Action Company documents increases in student and teacher attendance, declines in discipline problems, significantly improved student self-concept, improved life-adjustment skills, and improved school climate.

Thomas (1991) cites Wynne as saying good character is developed through persistent and pervasive reinforcement. The CHARACTER COUNTS! framework is designed to be implemented as a community effort. The "Exercising Character" curriculum was created with the option of being used "as-is" but also encourages educators to adapt the lesson plan to their situations. CHARACTER COUNTS! encourages a united effort of teaching, enforcing, advocating, and modeling through

parents and families, faith communities, schools, youth agencies, civic organizations, local government, media and businesses (Josephson Institute of Ethics 1997).

Bel-Air Elementary in Albuquerque, New Mexico was the first school to initiate a school-wide CHARACTER COUNTS! program and provides a good example of pervasive implementation. Their program began in 1993 and spread throughout the Albuquerque Public School System, the Albuquerque community, and the State of New Mexico.

Robin Saget, an educator at Bel-Air Elementary, provided a written description of CHARACTER COUNTS! efforts conducted at the school. Saget lists; school wide assemblies, “Word of the Month” programs taught and role-modeled by the entire staff, student recognition, guest speakers, reading and writing assignments exploring the Six Pillars of Character, murals, banners, pictures, posters, and school discipline procedures and classroom rules based on the Six Pillars of Character. Saget also describes community efforts to reinforce CHARACTER COUNTS! including parades, training for business leaders, and Albuquerque designating itself as a CHARACTER COUNTS! city.

In April of 1994, The Department of Albuquerque Public School Research, Development and Accountability compiled the results of a survey of Bel-Air students, staff and parents. Questions covered various aspects of student behavior, school staff relationships, training, and perceptions of the program. Results of the survey showed significant approval of the CHARACTER COUNTS! program and improvements in student behavior.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the correlation between schools' level of involvement in CHARACTER COUNTS! activities and the behavior of students. To make this determination, a survey instrument (Appendix C) was developed to collect data regarding: 1) respondents' perceptions of CHARACTER COUNTS! 2) school-wide efforts to implement CHARACTER COUNTS! activities and 3) educator and administrator observations of student knowledge and behavior.

Population

The population for this study was approximately 688 teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators in 29 of the 31 elementary schools from the Bristol Tennessee City, Kingsport City, and Sullivan County public school systems. Permission was not granted to conduct the study two of the elementary schools.

Instrument Design

Design and development of the survey instrument began with a review of previous research and evaluations of character education programs. Key research utilized in the development of this study included James Antis' evaluation of the Heartwood Curriculum (1997), impact statements published by the Positive Action

Company (1998), and CHARACTER COUNTS! evaluations conducted in Michigan (2000), New Mexico (1995), Nebraska (1998), South Dakota (1998, 1999), and Virginia (1999). Individuals with experience in CHARACTER COUNTS! content and strategies were also solicited for ideas regarding the survey instrument's content and procedures based on the objectives of the study.

Discussions with local school administrators indicated a written survey of educators and administrators would be the most feasible method of collecting the desired data.

Initial categories of questions were developed utilizing the Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education (Appendix B) published by the Character Education Partnership (1997). Major themes from these eleven principles were incorporated into the survey included; school atmosphere, and the involvement of parents, educators, students, and the community.

The format for wording, layout, and design of the questionnaire was based on guidelines by Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) in their book, "Educational Research: an Introduction."

Demographic Information

The first section of the survey instrument collected demographic data. These questions were designed to help respondents become familiar with the instrument format as well as identify the school, grade, and job title of the respondents. This data was collected to allow the researcher manipulate and analyze the data.

“Your School’s Involvement”

The second section of the survey instrument asked respondents to describe their school’s involvement in various CHARACTER COUNTS! activities. Each question had respondents select a description that most closely reflected their school’s effort and involvement. Specific question content was derived from sources including: the “Good Ideas Handbook,” published by the National CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition; a list of CHARACTER COUNTS! activities compiled by Peggy Adkins, author of the “Exercising Character” curriculum; the “Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education”; other character education survey instruments; and activities known by the researcher to be conducted in elementary schools with CHARACTER COUNTS! programs.

Construct and content validity for the School Involvement section of the survey instrument were examined by utilizing a panel of eight experts with experience in CHARACTER COUNTS! content and strategies. Panel members were asked to review each variable of school involvement, and select a rating of importance for each variable in imparting positive values through the schools. Ratings ranged from one for low importance to 10 for high importance. Space was provided after each question for panel members to list concerns or comments about the question. The cover letter and questionnaire sent to panel members can be found in Appendix D.

Panel member ratings and written comments were used to determine if modifications to the instrument were necessary. Responses were used to calculate a mean score to weight the importance of each type of school involvement. These weighted scores are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Weights for School Involvement Variables and Highest Possible Scores for Weighted School Involvement Variables.

	School Involvement Variables	Weight	Possible Score
1	Teachers and administrators participating in one or more hours of CHARACTER COUNTS! training each year	8.75	61.25
2	Staff members (i.e. secretaries, janitors, cafeteria workers, bus drivers) participating in one or more hours of CHARACTER COUNTS! training each year	7.88	55.16
3	Utilizing lessons from the “Exercising Character” curriculum	5.88	41.16
4	Teachers taking responsibility for teaching the Six Pillars of Character	9.13	63.91
5	Staff members taking responsibility for reinforcing the Six Pillars of Character	9.25	64.75
6	Administrators taking responsibility for reinforcing the Six Pillars of Character	9.75	68.25
7	Emphasizing individual Pillars of Character on a school-wide basis	9.63	67.41
8	Daily school-wide CHARACTER COUNTS! related messages (through intercom, video, written or other announcements)	8.25	57.75
9	School-wide functions, events or activities with CHARACTER COUNTS! or the Six Pillars of Character deliberately promoted through written or spoken communications	8.75	61.25
10	Lasting CHARACTER COUNTS! displays (murals, sculptures, engravings, etc.)	8.50	59.50
11	Student involvement in creating/providing displays (posters, banners, bulletin boards, art projects, t-shirts, etc.) about character for their classroom or the school	8.88	62.16
12	Faculty and/or staff member involvement in creating/providing displays (posters, banners, bulletin boards, art projects, t-shirts, etc.) about character for their classroom or the school	7.25	50.75
13	Parent involvement in creating/providing displays (posters, banners, bulletin boards, art projects, t-shirts, etc.) about character for their student’s classroom or the school	7.75	54.25
14	Older students working with younger students on CHARACTER COUNTS! activities	8.13	56.91
15	School rules and policies revised to reflect the Six Pillars of Character	9.50	66.50
16	Disciplinary actions toward students making reference to one or more Pillars of Character	9.25	64.75
17	Student recognition for positive behavior related to the Pillars of Character	9.50	66.50
18	Keeping parents informed about CHARACTER COUNTS! efforts in the school	8.88	62.16
19	Parents' support of CHARACTER COUNTS! efforts in the school	9.13	63.91
20	Community support of CHARACTER COUNTS! efforts in the school	9.13	63.91
			1212.19

“Your Involvement”

In the third section of the survey instrument, educators were asked to record their perceptions of, experiences with, and involvement in various aspects of the CHARACTER COUNTS! program. Data for the 15 statements was collected utilizing a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.” Statements 1, 2, 7, 8, 12 and 13 represented the respondents’ commitment and effort to teach character or CHARACTER COUNTS!. Statements 3-6, 9-11, 14 and 15 represented the respondents’ perceptions of the effects of CHARACTER COUNTS! in their school, their classroom, and their teaching.

“Your Students”

The final section of the survey instrument measured respondents’ perceptions of student knowledge and behavior related to the values of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. Educators and administrators were asked to respond to 23 statements using a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.”

Statements regarding knowledge of and behavior related to CHARACTER COUNTS! were developed from the Six Pillars of Character and other character education survey instruments. In statements 1-7, respondents rated student comprehension of CHARACTER COUNTS! values and concepts. Statements 8-23 asked respondents to rate student behavior.

Construct and content validity for the “Your Students” and “Your Involvement” sections of the survey instrument were provided by another panel of experts with experience in research design, program evaluation, and the CHARACTER COUNTS! framework. Changes and modifications were made as recommended by the committee.

A pilot test was conducted to confirm the validity and readability of the survey instrument. Three elementary schools located in Sevier County, Tennessee were selected by the local 4-H Agent who had been involved in training educators on the CHARACTER COUNTS! program and had visited the schools on a frequent basis. The 4-H Agent was instructed to select schools based on her knowledge of their high, moderate, and low levels of involvement in CHARACTER COUNTS! activities.

Telephone calls were made to each pilot test school principal to request participation and make arrangements for the distribution and return of pilot survey instruments. A cover letter and seven survey instruments with cover letters were mailed to each principal (Appendix E). The pilot surveys were picked up from the schools four days later by the researcher. Of the 21 surveys distributed, twenty were completed and returned.

Data collected regarding school involvement were consistent with the expectations of the Sevier County 4-H Agent and the researcher; schools known to be most involved in CHARACTER COUNTS! activities scored highest while the least involved school scored lowest. Minor modifications were made to clarify questions and statements on the survey instrument.

Data Collection

The collection of data from public elementary schools in Sullivan County began with requests for permission to conduct the research. Requests were sent to the directors of the Bristol Tennessee City, Kingsport City and Sullivan County school systems (Appendix F).

Utilizing data from a large number of educators and administrators from several elementary schools provided greater anonymity for schools, educators and students.

Discussions with administrators from one school system brought forth concerns for protecting the anonymity of individual schools, so descriptive information about school names, locations, and size will be kept confidential and are not revealed in the findings of this study. Identification numbers were assigned to each school after involvement scores were determined. These identification numbers are consistent in each table throughout the study.

Packets, consisting of a cover letter and survey instrument (Appendix C) inside an unsealed envelope, were hand-delivered to each participating school by the researcher. Instructions were included for each principal to distribute a survey packet to each classroom teacher, guidance counselor, and administrator in their school and to collect completed surveys in the school office. Arrangements were made at that time to pick up the surveys approximately one week later in the school office. Reminders were faxed or telephoned to each school before surveys were to be picked up and requests were made for schools to remind respondents to complete and return their surveys before the pick-up date.

Although most schools were conscientious about returning surveys in a timely manner, some schools were allowed additional time to collect surveys and another pick-up time or method of survey return was established.

Survey instruments were collected from 328 respondents from 27 elementary schools

Analysis of Data

To calculate school involvement index scores, values were assigned for each response that could be selected by respondents in questions 1-20. To avoid discrepancies in weighted scores “0” was consistently assigned for no involvement and

"7" was consistently assigned for the highest level of involvement. A value of "7" was selected as the top value based on the number of responses for question 3 where respondents were instructed to select each of seven curriculum activities in which their students had participated. In coding the data, when a respondent selected any two of the seven curriculum activities, a "2" was entered. When a respondent selected all seven of the curriculum activities, a "7" was entered. Questions 7 and 10 had only two possible responses so values assigned to responses were "0" for "No" and "7" for "Yes."

Values assigned to responses for questions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 15, 16, and 17 were as follows:

Response	Value
None	0
Up to 25%	1
26-50%	3
51-75%	5
More than 75%	7

Values assigned to responses for questions 8 were:

Response	Value
Never	0
Rarely	1
Monthly	3
Weekly	5
Daily	7

Values assigned to responses for questions11, 12, 13, 14, and 18 were:

Response	Value
Never	0
Once	1
Two to five times	4
Six or more times	7

Values assigned to responses for questions 19 and 20 were:

Response	Value
No Support	0
Little Support	1
Some Support	3
Strong Support	5
Very Strong Support	7

Since the unit of comparison for this study was schools and not individual respondents, responses were grouped by school (N=27) and a mean score for each variable was determined for each school. The mean level of involvement was then multiplied by the weight of each variable. The weighted variable scores were then summed to arrive at an overall individual school involvement score. The potential range for school involvement scores was from 0, indicating no involvement, to 1212.19 indicating full involvement.

In the "Your Involvement" and "Your Students" sections, scoring of statements ranged from 1 point for "Strongly Disagree," 2 points for "Disagree," 3 points for "Neutral," 4 points for "Agree," and 5 points for "Strongly Agree." Scoring was reversed for negatively worded statements including 7 under "Your Involvement" and statements 9, 16, 18, and 20 under "Your Students."

To calculate student behavior scores, responses were grouped by school and a mean score for each variable was determined for each school. Mean scores from statements 5, 6, and 9 in the "Your Involvement" section and statements 1-21 in the "Your Students" section were summed to arrive at the student behavior scores for each school. The potential range for scores was 24 to 120.

Pearson Correlation Coefficients were utilized to study the relationship between the school involvement index scores and the student behavior index scores. Pearson Correlation Coefficients were also calculated on individual variables that comprised the

overall student behavior index scores. Where appropriate, correlation coefficients were squared to produce a coefficient of determination, which explains the percentage of variance in the dependent variable that is attributable to the independent variable. Statistical analysis was processed utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) PC Release 10.0 computer software package.

School Involvement Profile

To develop the school involvement profile, three schools with the highest student behavior index scores were isolated and examined for commonalities. Strategies reported from the school involvement section of the survey were analyzed and consistent themes of involvement were reported.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Objective 1

The first objective of this study was to describe respondents demographically and to report their general perceptions about the CHARACTER COUNTS! program.

Survey packets were distributed to approximately 688 educators and administrators at 29 elementary schools in three public school systems. Demographics collected from the school systems, classified 91.4% as teachers, 4.1% as guidance counselors, and 4.5% as administrators.

Survey instruments were collected from 328 individuals in 27 schools producing an individual response rate of 47.7%. The distribution of individuals who chose to respond, was similar to the demographics of the entire population including: classroom teachers (87.1%), special education teachers (1.5%), guidance counselors (5.2%), school administrators (3.4%), and other types of school employees (2.8%).

Distribution of grade levels taught included: kindergarten (13.8%), first grade (15.3%), second grade (15.3%), third grade (13.5%), fourth grade (12.9%), fifth grade (13.8%), sixth grade (0.9%), and non-grade level assignments, including principals, guidance counselors and others (14.4%).

Perception data of respondents is listed in detail in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondents' Perceptions of CHARACTER COUNTS! as compared between All Respondents and Respondents from the Three Schools with the Highest School involvement scores.

Text of Question	Possible Responses	N	All Respondents Responses	N	Top Three Schools Responses
I believe character education is an important part of my work	Strongly Disagree	3	1.0%	0	0%
	Disagree	3	1.0%	0	0%
	Neutral	9	2.9%	0	0%
	Agree	119	38.3%	18	34.0%
	Strongly Agree	177	56.9%	35	66.0%
I believe CHARACTER COUNTS! is an effective program	Strongly Disagree	1	0.3%	0	0%
	Disagree	3	1.0%	0	0%
	Neutral	48	15.9%	2	3.8%
	Agree	157	52.2%	23	43.4%
	Strongly Agree	92	30.6%	28	52.8%
CHARACTER COUNTS! has positively affected my classroom atmosphere.	Strongly Disagree	7	2.4%	0	0%
	Disagree	11	3.7%	1	1.9%
	Neutral	76	25.9%	3	5.7%
	Agree	135	45.9%	27	50.9%
	Strongly Agree	65	22.1%	22	41.5%
CHARACTER COUNTS! has positively affected our school atmosphere.	Strongly Disagree	6	2.0%	0	0%
	Disagree	10	3.4%	1	1.9%
	Neutral	89	30.3%	4	7.5%
	Agree	137	46.6%	29	54.7%
	Strongly Agree	52	17.7%	19	35.8%
CHARACTER COUNTS! is an integral part of our school atmosphere.	Strongly Disagree	18	6.0%	1	1.9%
	Disagree	21	7.0%	0	0%
	Neutral	66	22.1%	3	5.7%
	Agree	141	47.3%	36	67.9%
	Strongly Agree	52	17.4%	13	24.5%
CHARACTER COUNTS! is a fundamental part of the curriculum in our school.	Strongly Disagree	18	6.1%	0	0%
	Disagree	33	11.1%	1	1.9%
	Neutral	83	28.0%	10	18.9%
	Agree	118	39.9%	30	56.6%
	Strongly Agree	44	14.9%	12	22.6%

Table 2. Continued

Text of Question	Possible Responses	N	All Respondents Responses	N	Top Three Schools Responses
Do parents support CHARACTER COUNTS! efforts in your school?	No Support	54	18.8%	0	0%
	Little Support	50	17.4%	3	5.8%
	Some Support	97	33.8%	17	32.7%
	Strong Support	52	18.1%	17	32.7%
	Very Strong Support	34	11.8%	15	28.8%
Does the community support CHARACTER COUNTS! efforts in your school?	No Support	61	21.6%	2	3.8%
	Little Support	54	19.1%	4	7.7%
	Some Support	99	35.1%	17	32.7%
	Strong Support	46	16.3%	19	36.5%
	Very Strong Support	22	7.8%	10	19.2%

Objective 2

The second objective of this study was to establish and utilize criteria for measuring school involvement in CHARACTER COUNTS! activities.

This objective was accomplished through the development of a survey instrument. In accordance with the researcher's expectations, schools known to be highly involved in CHARACTER COUNTS! activities produced higher scores on the school involvement index than schools in which there is little known involvement.

There were twenty questions utilized to determine school involvement in various school wide activities. Written comments and unanswered questions on several surveys returned by classroom teachers indicated a lack of knowledge of school wide activities.

When respondents were asked to identify the lessons from the CHARACTER COUNTS! "Exercising Character" curriculum in which their students had participated in during the 2000-2001 school year. In this study, 22% of respondents indicated their students had not participated in any "Exercising Character" lessons; 54.8% indicated

their students had participated in all seven lessons; and the remaining 15.1% indicated between one and six lessons in which students had participated.

As shown on Table 3, school involvement index scores ranged from 40.96 to 731.96 points. The potential range for scores was 0 to 1212.19.

Objective 3

The third objective of this study was to record educators' and administrators' perceptions of student behavior related to the CHARACTER COUNTS! framework.

Utilizing a five-point Likert-type scale, respondents were asked to indicate the strength of their agreement or disagreement with 24 statements regarding student behavior.

A partial listing of statements and responses regarding student behavior can be found in Table 4 and represent the findings of this objective: Answers from the total group of respondents are compared to answers of respondents from the top three schools based on school involvement scores.

Twenty-four variables were utilized in calculating the student behavior index score with scores ranging from 64.20 to 98.78. The potential range for student behavior index scores was 24 to 120. Mean scores listed by school identification number can be found in Table 5.

Objective 4

The fourth objective of this research project was to study the correlation between the level of school involvement in CHARACTER COUNTS! activities and the behavior of elementary school students.

Table 3. School Involvement Index Scores

School Identification Number	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	N
1	40.96	99.90	15
2	57.31	114.96	10
3	74.23	133.12	9
4	129.25	83.93	7
5	157.53	193.87	8
6	174.23	175.29	20
7	241.10	213.06	11
8	258.45	191.85	8
9	287.04	193.05	13
10	317.93	153.56	3
11	396.64	202.46	13
12	438.32	279.93	6
13	446.61	269.39	14
14	487.35	366.69	4
15	490.08	248.23	14
16	496.78	283.06	19
17	512.53	277.33	8
18	523.36	281.72	22
19	531.09	230.23	17
20	539.42	260.10	13
21	567.45	209.90	12
22	580.34	122.37	7
23	603.82	197.36	3
24	605.35	200.22	19
25	639.38	223.49	19
26	719.08	208.00	16
27	731.96	160.43	18
Means	**432.52**	**292.99**	

Table 4. Representative Questions Regarding Student Behavior with Responses from All Respondents as compared to Respondents from the Top Three Schools Based on School Involvement Scores.

Text of Question	Possible Responses	N	All Respondents Responses	N	Top Three Schools Responses
CHARACTER COUNTS! has a positive effect on my students behavior.	Strongly Disagree	1	0.4%	0	0
	Disagree	10	3.5%	0	0
	Neutral	84	29.7%	5	9.6
	Agree	152	53.7%	35	67.3
	Strongly Agree	36	12.7%	12	23.1
My students could explain each of the Six Pillars of Character	Strongly Disagree	21	7.3%	0	0%
	Disagree	50	17.4%	2	3.8%
	Neutral	54	18.8%	6	11.5%
	Agree	136	47.4%	35	67.3%
	Strongly Agree	26	9.1%	9	17.3%
My students talk with their families about having good character.	Strongly Disagree	5	1.8%	0	0
	Disagree	24	8.6%	1	1.9
	Neutral	143	51.1%	24	46.2
	Agree	93	33.2%	21	40.4
	Strongly Agree	15	5.4%	6	11.5
Fighting is a problem with my students	Strongly Disagree	45	15.4%	15	28.8
	Disagree	133	45.5%	26	50.0
	Neutral	50	17.1%	4	7.7
	Agree	57	19.5%	6	11.5
	Strongly Agree	7	2.4%	1	1.9
My students are responsible in returning homework and/or other assignments.	Strongly Disagree	4	1.4%	0	0
	Disagree	33	11.5%	1	1.9
	Neutral	60	20.8%	11	21.2
	Agree	165	57.3%	33	63.5
	Strongly Agree	26	9.0%	7	13.5
Stealing/theft is a problem with my students.	Strongly Disagree	75	25.6%	18	35.3
	Disagree	160	54.6%	28	54.9
	Neutral	35	11.9%	4	7.8
	Agree	22	7.5%	1	2
	Strongly Agree	1	0.3%	0	0

Table 4. Continued

Text of Question	Possible Responses	N	All Respondents Responses	N	Top Three Schools Responses
Lying/dishonesty is a problem with my students.	Strongly Disagree	39	13.5%	12	23.1
	Disagree	132	45.7%	21	40.4
	Neutral	51	17.6%	11	21.2
	Agree	65	22.5%	8	15.4
	Strongly Agree	2	0.7%	0	0
Cheating is a problem among my students.	Strongly Disagree	35	11.9%	9	17.3%
	Disagree	157	53.4%	28	53.8%
	Neutral	61	20.7%	13	25.0%
	Agree	39	13.3%	2	3.8%
	Strongly Agree	2	0.7%	0	0%
Students I work with demonstrate empathy/caring for each other.	Strongly Disagree	2	0.7%	0	0%
	Disagree	18	6.2%	0	0%
	Neutral	49	16.8%	5	9.6%
	Agree	194	66.4%	40	76.9%
	Strongly Agree	29	9.9%	7	13.5%
Students I work with demonstrate self-control/self discipline.	Strongly Disagree	2	0.7%	0	0%
	Disagree	47	16.4%	2	4.0%
	Neutral	60	21.0%	9	18.0%
	Agree	166	58.0%	34	68.0%
	Strongly Agree	11	3.8%	5	10.0%
My students demonstrate concern for people in the community.	Strongly Disagree	1	0.3%	0	0%
	Disagree	23	7.9%	1	2.0%
	Neutral	104	35.7%	14	27.5%
	Agree	155	53.3%	33	64.7%
	Strongly Agree	8	2.7%	3	5.9%
My students demonstrate concern for the environment.	Strongly Disagree	1	0.3%	0	0%
	Disagree	18	6.2%	1	1.9%
	Neutral	60	20.6%	8	15.4%
	Agree	191	65.6%	38	73.1%
	Strongly Agree	21	7.2%	5	9.6%

Table 4. Continued

Text of Question	Possible Responses	N	All Respondents Responses	N	Top Three Schools Responses
Students I work with demonstrate good decision making skills.	Strongly Disagree	2	0.7%	0	0%
	Disagree	31	10.7%	1	2.0%
	Neutral	90	31.1%	11	21.6%
	Agree	161	55.7%	37	72.5%
	Strongly Agree	5	1.7%	2	3.9%
My students respect adults.	Strongly Disagree	3	1.0%	0	0%
	Disagree	32	11.0%	1	2.0%
	Neutral	55	19.0%	6	11.8%
	Agree	183	63.1%	37	72.5%
	Strongly Agree	17	5.9%	7	13.7%
My students respect each other	Strongly Disagree	2	0.7%	0	0%
	Disagree	41	14.2%	2	3.9%
	Neutral	66	22.9%	8	15.7%
	Agree	167	58.0%	37	72.5%
	Strongly Agree	12	4.2%	4	7.8%
My students exhibit positive character traits so they can receive recognition.	Strongly Disagree	6	2.1%	0	0%
	Disagree	50	17.1%	3	5.8%
	Neutral	89	30.5%	11	21.2%
	Agree	133	45.5%	32	61.5%
	Strongly Agree	14	4.8%	6	11.5%
My students exhibit positive character traits because they believe in doing what is right	Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0	0%
	Disagree	12	4.1%	0	0%
	Neutral	70	24.1%	6	11.8%
	Agree	182	62.8%	36	70.6%
	Strongly Agree	26	9.0%	9	17.6%

Table 5. Student Behavior Index Scores

School Identification Number	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	N
1	77.50	16.54	12
2	69.00	29.56	9
3	79.75	9.88	8
4	74.00	35.25	6
5	64.20	40.12	5
6	81.73	14.30	15
7	66.67	29.29	9
8	81.50	14.55	8
9	71.92	23.82	13
10	74.33	22.81	3
11	87.54	13.48	13
12	91.33	12.47	6
13	82.85	14.57	13
14	97.67	5.69	3
15	88.36	12.34	14
16	83.63	26.34	19
17	85.25	8.08	8
18	88.55	20.54	22
19	80.94	20.67	17
20	78.77	31.63	13
21	83.25	22.75	12
22	96.00	6.78	7
23	71.00	52.20	3
24	80.42	19.75	19
25	91.63	9.09	19
26	90.25	24.97	16
27	98.78	8.80	18
Means	**82.10**	**20.23**	

Pearson Correlation Coefficients were used to describe these relationships. Although one can interpret statistical significance of a relationship using correlation coefficients, according to Davis (1971), a more important consideration is the magnitude of the correlations. Davis describes the magnitude of correlations as follows:

1.0	Perfect Correlation
.70 - .99	Very High Correlation
.50 - .69	Substantial Correlation
.30 - .49	Moderate Correlation
.10 - .29	Low Correlation
.00 - .09	Negligible Correlation

Using Davis's convention, when the school involvement index scores were calculated with the student behavior index scores a substantial positive correlation was found (P=.64). Literally interpreted, this means that 40.32% of the variation in behavior scores is attributable to the school involvement scores.

Pearson Correlation Coefficients were also calculated for the 24 individual variables that comprised student behavior index scores. These variables have been categorized into three major areas; general CHARACTER COUNTS! behaviors, specific value related behaviors, and comprehension of terminology.

Statements regarding the CHARACTER COUNTS! program showed substantial and very high positive correlations (P=.53-.84). These statements represented the specific effects of CHARACTER COUNTS! on classroom atmosphere, school atmosphere, student behavior, and discipline problems. Also included in this category is the statement, "My students could explain each of the Six Pillars of Character."

Statements regarding specific student behaviors showed moderate to high positive correlations (P=.32-.63). These statements asked respondents about

behaviors, demonstrated by their students that were directly related to each of the Six Pillars of Character.

Student comprehension of CHARACTER COUNTS! terminology showed low to moderate positive correlations (P=.21-.48). These statements asked if students could give examples, from their own lives, of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship.

Data of the correlation coefficients between school involvement levels and overall student behavior index scores is listed in Table 6. Correlation coefficients are also listed for each variable included in the student behavior index scores.

Objective 5

The fifth objective of this research project was to develop a profile of school involvement in CHARACTER COUNTS! activities for the schools with the highest levels of positive student behavior. Three schools were identified utilizing the student behavior index scores. Scores were: 98.78, 97.67, and 96.00 out of a possible range of 24 to 120. Individual questions along with responses are listed in Table 7.

Table 6. Correlations of School Involvement Index Scores with Student Behavior Index Scores and Individual Variables Comprising the Behavior Index Scores

Student Behavior Score Components	P=
Overall Student Behavior Index Score	**0.64**
My students talk with their families about having good character.	0.53
I have fewer discipline problems because of CHARACTER COUNTS!	0.60
My students could explain each of the Six Pillars of Character.	0.78
CHARACTER COUNTS! has a positive effect on my students' behavior.	0.80
CHARACTER COUNTS! has positively affected my classroom atmosphere.	0.82
CHARACTER COUNTS! has positively affected our school atmosphere	0.84
Cheating is a problem among my students.	0.32
Stealing/theft is a problem with my students.	0.35
My students respect each other.	0.40
Students I work with demonstrate good decision making skills.	0.40
Lying/dishonesty is a problem with my students.	0.41
Fighting is a problem with my students.	0.41
My students respect adults.	0.45
My students are responsible in returning homework and/or other assignments.	0.47
My students demonstrate concern for people in the community.	0.51
My students demonstrate concern for the environment.	0.58
Students I work with demonstrate self-control/self-discipline.	0.63
Students I work with demonstrate empathy/caring for each other.	0.63
My students could give an example of caring from their own lives.	0.21
My students could give an example of respect from their own lives.	0.22
My students could give an example of responsibility from their own lives.	0.22
My students could give an example of fairness from their own lives.	0.22
My students could give an example of trustworthiness from their own lives.	0.46
My students could give an example of citizenship from their own lives.	0.48

N=27

Table 7. Involvement Profile of the Top Three Schools Based on Student Behavior Index Scores

Text of Question	Possible Responses	N	Response Percentages
What percentage of the teachers and administrators at your school have participated in an hour or more of CHARACTER COUNTS! training in the past 12 months?	None	2	8.7%
	Up to 25%	15	65.2%
	26-50%	2	8.7%
	51-75%	1	4.3%
	More than 75%	3	13.0%
What percentage of the staff members (i.e. secretaries, janitors, cafeteria workers, bus drivers) at your school have participated in an hour or more of CHARACTER COUNTS! training in the past 12 months?	None	12	66.7%
	Up to 25%	6	33.3%
	26-50%	0	0%
	51-75%	0	0%
	More than 75%	0	0%
Which lessons from the "Exercising Character" curriculum have your students participated in this year? (Scored Cumulatively)	None	0	0%
	1	0	0%
	2	0	0%
	3	0	0%
	4	0	0%
	5	0	0%
	6	1	3.7%
	7	26	96.3%
What percentage of the teachers in your school take responsibility for teaching about the Six Pillars of Character?	None	1	4.0%
	Up to 25%	10	40.0%
	26-50%	1	4.0%
	51-75%	2	8.0%
	More than 75%	11	44.0%
What percentage of the staff members in your school take responsibility for reinforcing the Six Pillars of Character?	None	0	0%
	Up to 25%	0	0%
	26-50%	2	7.7%
	51-75%	3	11.5%
	More than 75%	21	80.8%
What percentage of the administrators in your school take responsibility for reinforcing the Six Pillars of Character?	None	0	0%
	Up to 25%	0	0%
	26-50%	1	3.7%
	51-75%	3	11.1%
	More than 75%	23	85.2%

Table 7. Continued

Text of Question	Possible Responses	N	Response Percentages
Does your school emphasize individual Pillars of Character on a school-wide basis at different times? (i.e. Pillar of the Week or Pillar of the Month)	No	6	22.2%
	Yes	21	77.8%
How often does your school deliver to students, school-wide CHARACTER COUNTS! related messages (through intercom, video, written or other announcements)?	Never	0	0%
	Rarely	2	7.1%
	Monthly	9	32.1%
	Weekly	11	39.3%
	Daily	6	21.4%
What percentage of school-wide functions, events or activities is CHARACTER COUNTS!, or the Six Pillars of Character, deliberately promoted through written or spoken communications?	None	0	0%
	Up to 25%	6	22.2%
	26-50%	10	37.0%
	51-75%	7	25.9%
	More than 75%	4	14.8%
Does your school have any lasting/permanent CHARACTER COUNTS! displays (murals, sculptures, engravings, etc.)?	No	1	3.6%
	Yes	27	96.4%
How often has each student been involved in creating/providing displays (posters, banners, bulletin boards, art projects, t-shirts, etc.) about CHARACTER COUNTS! this school year?	Never	3	12.5%
	Once	4	16.7%
	Two to five times	13	54.2%
	Six or more times	4	16.7%
How often were faculty and/or staff members involved in creating/providing displays (posters, banners, bulletin boards, art projects, t-shirts, etc.) about CHARACTER COUNTS! this school year?	Never	4	17.4%
	Once	5	21.7%
	Two to five times	10	43.5%
	Six or more times	4	17.4%
How often were parents involved in creating/ providing displays (posters, banners, bulletin boards, art projects, t-shirts, etc.) about CHARACTER COUNTS! this school year?	Never	6	26.1%
	Once	3	13.0%
	Two to five times	10	43.5%
	Six or more times	4	17.4%

Table 7. Continued

Text of Question	Possible Responses	N	Response Percentages
How often have older students worked with younger students on CHARACTER COUNTS! activities this school year?	Never	9	45.0%
	Once	2	10.0%
	Two to five times	4	20.0%
	Six or more times	5	25.0%
What percentage of school rules and policies have been revised to reflect the Six Pillars of Character?	None	2	10.5%
	Up to 25%	6	31.6%
	26-50%	4	21.1%
	51-75%	2	10.5%
	More than 75%	5	26.3%
What percentage of disciplinary actions toward students have made reference to one or more Pillars of Character this school year?	None	2	8.3%
	Up to 25%	0	0%
	26-50%	2	8.3%
	51-75%	9	37.5%
	More than 75%	11	45.8%
What percentage of students have been recognized for positive behavior related to the Pillars of Character this school year?	None	0	0%
	Up to 25%	1	3.8%
	26-50%	8	30.8%
	51-75%	12	46.2%
	More than 75%	5	19.2%
How often have parents been informed about CHARACTER COUNTS! efforts in your school this school year?	Never	1	4.2%
	Once	2	8.3%
	Two to five times	12	50.0%
	Six or more times	9	37.5%
Do parents support CHARACTER COUNTS! efforts in your school?	No Support	0	0%
	Little Support	2	7.1%
	Some Support	6	21.4%
	Strong Support	10	35.7%
	Very Strong Support	10	35.7%
Does the community support CHARACTER COUNTS! efforts in your school?	No Support	0	0%
	Little Support	2	7.7%
	Some Support	10	38.5%
	Strong Support	9	34.6%
	Very Strong Support	5	19.2%

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The desire to pass along values from one generation to the next is documented through Biblical references to teaching the Ten Commandments and Aristotle's writings on character formation. Recent documents reaffirm human beings' desire to impart positive values. The "Character Education Manifesto," the "Eleven Principals of Effective Character Education," and the "Aspen Declaration," are only a few of the most prominent documents advocating the teaching of positive values.

In 1992, Michael Josephson, the founder and president of the Joseph and Edna Josephson Institute of Ethics, gathered a diverse group of leading educators, ethicists, and youth service professionals to identify common, core ethical values that could be taught, enforced, advocated, and modeled by all people and organizations regardless of political beliefs, religious views, race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status (Josephson Institute of Ethics, 1997).

This group crafted a document called the Aspen Declaration (Appendix A) in which they identified six "Pillars of Character" including: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. Local CHARACTER COUNTS! coalitions

work within their communities to teach, enforce, advocate and model the “Six Pillars of Character” utilizing materials and curriculum from the national organization and their own resources and creativity to develop activities that can be integrated into their existing programs.

CHARACTER COUNTS! was initiated in Sullivan County, Tennessee in 1995. The first CHARACTER COUNTS! training for teachers in Sullivan County was conducted in October of 1996.

As in any educational endeavor, simply providing instruction does not ensure the students will learn the desired information or adopt the desired behaviors. To be truly effective, programs must be implemented that encourage positive changes in student behavior. Thomas Lickona, (1991) in “Educating for Character,” explains character in three interrelated parts of moral knowing, moral feeling and moral behavior. He goes on to say, “Good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good.”

The teaching of values must prove to be effective to warrant the efforts and resources involved in developing and conducting an educational program. Students can be taught to memorize the CHARACTER COUNTS! Six Pillars of Character, but if they do not consistently put the values to practice in their lives, the program is not effective.

Key research utilized in the development of this study included James Antis’ evaluation of the Heartwood Curriculum, impact statements published by the Positive Action Program, and CHARACTER COUNTS! program evaluations conducted in Michigan, New Mexico, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Virginia.

The objectives of this study were: 1) to describe respondents demographically and to report their general perceptions about the CHARACTER COUNTS! program, 2) establish and utilize criteria for measuring school involvement in teaching the

CHARACTER COUNTS! Six Pillars of Character, 3) record educators' and administrators' perceptions of student behavior related to the CHARACTER COUNTS! framework, 4) study the correlation between the level of school involvement in CHARACTER COUNTS! activities and the behavior of elementary school students, and 5) develop a profile of school involvement in CHARACTER COUNTS! activities for the top three schools based on student behavior scores.

A survey instrument was designed to measure levels of school involvement, respondent perceptions of student behaviors, and respondents' general perceptions about the CHARACTER COUNTS! program.

Input related to content and construct validity were provided by panels of experts with experience in CHARACTER COUNTS! contents and strategies, and educational research. The survey was piloted with three elementary schools of known levels of involvement in the CHARACTER COUNTS! program.

Data collection took place in 29 of the 31 public elementary schools from three public school systems within Sullivan County, Tennessee. Approximately 688 survey packets were distributed with 328 survey instruments collected from 27 elementary schools.

The unit of comparison for this study was schools, not individual respondents. Therefore, to calculate school involvement index scores, responses were grouped by school and a mean score for each variable was determined. The mean level of involvement for each variable was then multiplied by a weight determined by a panel of experts. The weighted variable scores were then summed to arrive at an individual school involvement score. The potential range for school involvement scores was from zero, indicating no involvement, to 1212.19, indicating full involvement.

To calculate student behavior index scores, responses were again grouped by school, and a mean score for each variable was determined. Mean scores from statements 5, 6, and 9 in the "Your Involvement" section and statements 1-21 in the "Your Students" section were summed to arrive at a student behavior index score for each school.

Pearson Correlation Coefficients were utilized to study the relationship between the school involvement index scores and the student behavior index scores. Pearson Correlation Coefficients were also calculated on individual variables that comprised the overall student behavior index scores.

Significant Findings

In studying educators and administrators general perceptions about the CHARACTER COUNTS! program, it was discovered that 95.2% of respondents agreed (38.3%) or strongly agreed (56.9%) that character education is an important part of their work. This would indicate they realize it is important to teach values whether an organized, purposeful program exists or not. Approximately 40% of all respondents indicated they perceived "Little Support" or "No Support" from parents or the community for CHARACTER COUNTS! efforts in the schools. This was a sharp contrast with three schools with the highest student behavior scores. More than 70% of respondents from these schools indicated strong or very strong support from parents, and 54%indicated strong or very strong support from the community.

More than 80% of respondents believe CHARACTER COUNTS! is an effective program. These respondents work with elementary school age children on a daily basis and if they believe CHARACTER COUNTS! is effective, this should be a strong indicator of program success.

In developing an index to measure school involvement, this instrument was successful. Schools known by the researcher to be highly involved in CHARACTER COUNTS! activities scored highly while schools known to be less involved scored lower. One characteristic of the CHARACTER COUNTS! framework is its flexibility to be adapted into existing curricula and organizational cultures. The program does not have a rigid design for implementation, so evaluation must also be flexible. This survey instrument and accompanying school involvement index allowed for differences in implementation while still measuring overall involvement. Differences in implementation could be illustrated through a hypothetical situation where one school focused on enforcing the Six Pillars of Character using t-shirt designs and announcements at sporting events while another, equally involved school, focused on enforcing the Six Pillars of Character through a student mentoring program and daily school-wide announcements over the intercom system.

The third objective of this study was to record educators' and administrators' perceptions of student behavior related to the CHARACTER COUNTS! framework. A comparison of students' motivations for exhibiting positive character traits revealed an encouraging statistic. Regarding external motivations, half the respondents agreed (45.5%) or strongly agreed (4.8%) that their students exhibit positive character traits so they can receive recognition. When asked about intrinsic motivation, more than 70% of respondents agreed (62.8%) or strongly agreed (9.0%) that their students exhibit positive character traits because they believe in doing what is right.

It was also encouraging to see that survey respondents agreed (53.7%) or strongly agreed (12.7%) that CHARACTER COUNTS! has a positive affect on their students' behavior. Respondents also agreed (35.3%) or strongly agreed (4.4%) with the statement, "I have fewer discipline problems because of CHARACTER COUNTS."

While it cannot be stated that CHARACTER COUNTS! caused changes in behavior, this study shows a substantial positive correlation (P=.64) between school involvement index scores and student behavior index scores. That would indicate that 40.32% of the variation in behavior scores is related to variations in the school involvement scores.

Pearson Correlation Coefficients were also calculated for the 24 individual variables that comprised student behavior index scores. Statements specifically related to the CHARACTER COUNTS! program showed substantial and very high positive correlations (P=.53-.84). These statements represented the effects of the CHARACTER COUNTS! program on classroom atmosphere, school atmosphere, student behavior, and discipline problems. It would be expected that respondents from schools with highly involved CHARACTER COUNTS! programs would attribute positive effects on classroom and school atmosphere to the program.

Statements regarding behaviors demonstrated by students showed moderate to high correlations (P=.34-.63) with level of involvement. This would suggest that the more involved a school is, the more likely they will see results or effectiveness.

Student comprehension of CHARACTER COUNTS! terminology showed low to moderate positive correlations (P=.21-.48). These statements asked if students could give examples of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship from their own lives. Correlation coefficients were all positive including: trustworthiness (P= .46), citizenship (P=.48), caring (P=.21), respect (P=.22), responsibility (P=.22), and fairness (P=.22). More research is necessary to determine why only low to moderate positive correlations were found in regards to terminology used by CHARACTER COUNTS!

School Involvement Profile

The fifth objective of this research project was to develop a profile of school involvement in CHARACTER COUNTS! activities for the schools with the highest levels of positive student behavior. Three schools were identified utilizing the student behavior index scores. Scores were: 98.78, 97.67, and 96.00 out of a possible range of 24 to 120.

The highest level of consensus, at 96.4%, referred to schools having lasting or permanent CHARACTER COUNTS! displays described as murals, sculptures, engravings, etcetera. These types of permanent displays can emphasize to students, parents, and faculty, the school's long-term commitment to a CHARACTER COUNTS! program.

Use of the curriculum was also extremely high with 96.3% of respondents indicating that students had participated in all seven of the Exercising Character curriculum during the 2000-2001 school year.

Another significant characteristic revealed in the study was the support of CHARACTER COUNTS! by parents and the community. More than 70% of respondents from these schools indicated strong (35.7%) or very strong (35.7%) support from parents, and nearly 54%indicated strong (34.6%) or very strong (19.2%) support from the community.

Teacher and administrator training in CHARACTER COUNTS! was more prevalent in schools with the best behaved students. Although only limited training opportunities have been available within the past 12 months within Sullivan County, 91.3% of respondents from these schools implied that at least one teacher or administrator from their school had participated in an hour or more of CHARACTER

COUNTS! training in the last 12 months. Only 61.2% of respondents from the all schools made these same implications.

Respondents from these schools indicated that school-wide CHARACTER COUNTS! messages were delivered on a weekly (39.3%), monthly (32.1%), or daily (21.4%) basis.

School staff members and administrators take responsibility for reinforcing the Six Pillars of Character in these schools while main responsibility for teaching about the Six Pillars of Character is delegated to either the Guidance Counselors or shared by more than 75% of the teachers.

When asked if their school placed an emphasis on individual Pillars of Character on a school-wide basis at different times (such as; Pillar of the Week or Pillar of the Month), 77.8% of respondents indicated “Yes” while only 22.2% indicated “No”

All respondents from the top three schools with the best student behavior indicated that CHARACTER COUNTS! or the Six Pillars of Character were deliberately promoted through written or spoken communications at one or more school-wide functions, events, or activities.

Recommendations for Further Study

Replication of this study is recommended on a larger scale with other elementary schools and school systems to expand the application of the findings. Additional studies should incorporate test and re-test procedures to assess reliability issues.

The relationship between school involvement index scores and attendance rates of students and faculty, academic performances, school atmosphere and the number of discipline incidences should also be studied.

Instrument distribution and data collection procedures will need to be examined to assure that questions are asked of individuals with sufficient knowledge and understanding of school wide activities and involvement. In this study, 25.0% of surveys returned did not list a response for the percentage of school staff that had received one or more hours of CHARACTER COUNTS! training in the last 12 months and 18.3% did not respond to a similar question about training for teachers and administrators. Many teachers commented that they did not know about school wide efforts especially when it came to training, so extra efforts should be made to obtain survey responses from principals and guidance counselors.

Refinement of school involvement variables will also be necessary as new activities and types of involvement come into practice.

Data should also be collected directly from students through tests, surveys, and observed behaviors. Useful data for research would include comprehension of values, perceptions of the CHARACTER COUNTS! program, and specific demonstrated behaviors.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adkins, Peggy. Arceneaux, Johnny. (2001) Character Development Seminar conducted in Dickson, Tennessee on February 20-22, 2001. Josephson Institute of Ethics. Marina del Ray, California.

Albuquerque Public Schools (1995) A CHARACTER COUNTS! Handbook Albuquerque, New Mexico

Antis, James E. (1997) An Evaluation of the Effect of a Character Education Program on the Ethical Understanding, Ethical sensibility, and Ethical Behavior of Elementary Children. Doctoral dissertation, Duquesne University.

Berkowitz, Marvin W. (1997) A Primer for Evaluating a Character Education Initiative. The Character Education Partnership Washington, D.C.

Character Education Trust: a New Hampshire Charitable Trust http://www.charactereducationinfo.org

Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character. (1996) Character Education Manifesto Boston University School of Education, Boston, Massachusetts ED407299

Davis, J. A. (1971). Elementary Survey Analysis (pp. 49-51). Englewood, New Jersey; Prentice Hale, Inc.

Englund, Linda Stokes. (1996) Toward an Ethics Education Program: A Case Study Creating the Thoughtful School (Character Education and Moral Development). Northern Arizona University

Gall, Meredith D., Borg, Walter R., Gall, Joyce P. (1996) Educational Research: An Introduction, Sixth Edition. Longman Publishers USA White Plains, New York

Irwin, Claire C. (1988) What Research Tells the Principal About the Teaching of Values. Paper presented at Annual Convention of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. ED303476

Josephson Institute of Ethics. (1995) Exercising Character. Marina del Ray, California.

Josephson Institute of Ethics. (1997) Good Ideas to Help Young People Develop Good Character. Second Edition Marina del Ray, California.

Leming, James S. (1993) In Search of Effective Character Education. Educational Leadership. Volume 51, Number 3, pp. 63-71.

Lickona, Thomas (1991) Does Character Education Make a Difference? Utah State Office of Education, Available on the Internet at: http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/char_ed/diff.html

Lickona, Thomas. Schaps, Eric. Lewis, Catherine. (1996) Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education. The Character Education Partnership. Washington, D.C.

Lickona, Thomas What is the History of Character Education? http://www.cortland.edu/www/c4n5rs/history.htm

The Life Application Bible, New International Version. (1991) Tyndale House Publishers Inc.: Wheaton, Illinois and Zondervan Publishing House: Grand Rapids, Michigan

Lockwood, Anne Turnbaugh. (1997) Character Education: Controversy and Consensus Corwin Press, Inc. Thousand Oaks, California.

McDaniel, Annette Kusgen. (1998) Character Education: Developing Effective Programs Journal of Extension Vol. 36, N. 2

Michigan State University Extension. (2000) Michigan State University Extension Character Education Project. East Lansing, Michigan

National Center for Educational Statistics. (1996) Youth Indicators Available on the Internet at: http://nces.ed.gov/pubs/yi/

Nebraska 4-H Youth Development, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. (1998). Nebraska CHARACTER COUNTS! Evaluation Plan. Lincoln, Nebraska

Positive Action Company (1998) Positive Action Model for Comprehensive School Reform Twin Falls, Idaho;

Pritchard, Ivor. (1988) Character Education: Research Prospects and Problems. American Journal of Education. Vol.96, N. 4, pp.469-495.

Query, Sharon. Berkland, Melva L. (1997) Youth Learning Characteristics Iowa State University Cooperative Extension Service. Available on the Internet at: http://www.cyfernet.org/nnst/learnchar.html

Rasmussen, Wayne D. (1989) Taking the University to the People: Seventy-five years of Cooperative Extension. Iowa State University Press; Ames, IA; .

Schaeffer, Esther. Character Education: A prerequisite for Corporate Ethics. Ethics Resource Center pp.3.

Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills. (1991) What Work Requires of Schools - A SCANS Report for America 2000. U.S. Department of Labor: Washington, D.C.

South Dakota 4-H Foundation, South Dakota State University Cooperative Extension Service. (1998) South Dakota's CHARACTER COUNTS! Evaluation. Brookings, South Dakota.

South Dakota 4-H Foundation, South Dakota State University Cooperative Extension Service. (1999) South Dakota's Second CHARACTER COUNTS! Evaluation. Brookings, South Dakota.

Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-1007

Thomas, Ronald S. (1991) Assessing Character Education: Paradigms, Problems, and Potentials. The Clearing House. Vol. 96, N. 65, pp. 51-55 available at http://www.quest.edu/wnarticles2.htm

The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service. (2000) Tennessee 4-H... Get Into It!. SP 249

Virginia Cooperative Extension. (1999). Virginia Cooperative Extension CHARACTER COUNTS! Evaluation Plan. Blacksburg, Virginia.

Wessel, Thomas and Wessel, Marilyn. (1982) 4-H: An American Idea 1900-1980: A History of 4-H. National 4-H Council: Chevy Chase, Maryland.

Willman, H. A. (1952) The 4-H Handbook. Comstock Publishing Associates: Ithica, New York.

Wright, Ian (1977) An Analysis of Selected Curriculum Materials in Values/Moral Education. British Columbia University: Vancouver.

Wynne, Edward A. (1995) Transmitting Character in Schools- Some Common Questions and Answers. The Clearing House. Vol. 68, N. 3, pp. 151-153

Appendices

Appendix A

Aspen Declaration on Character Education

Aspen Declaration on Character Education

1. The next generation will be the stewards of our communities, nation and planet in extraordinarily critical times.

2. In such times, the well-being of our society requires an involved, caring citizenry with good moral character.

3. People do not automatically develop good moral character; therefore, conscientious efforts must be made to help young people develop the values and abilities necessary for moral decision making and conduct.

4. Effective character education is based on core ethical values rooted in democratic society, in particular, respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, justice and fairness, caring, and civic virtue and citizenship.

5. These core ethical values transcend cultural, religious and socioeconomic differences.

6. Character education is, first and foremost, an obligation of families and faith communities, but schools and youth-service organizations also have a responsibility to help develop the character of young people.

7. These responsibilities are best achieved when these groups work in concert.

8. The character and conduct of our youth reflect the character and conduct of society; therefore, every adult has the responsibility to teach and model the core ethical values and every social institution has the responsibility to promote the development of good character.

Josephson Institute of Ethics, 1992

Appendix B

Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education

Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education

1. Character education promotes core ethical values as the basis of good character.

2. "Character" must be comprehensively defined to include thinking, feeling, and behavior.

3. Effective character education requires an intentional, pro-active, and comprehensive approach that promotes the core values in all phases of school life.

4. The school must be a caring community.

5. To develop character, students need opportunities for moral action.

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

7. Character education should strive to develop students' intrinsic motivation.

8. The school staff must become a learning and moral community in which all share responsibility for character education and attempt to adhere to the same core values that guide the education of students.

9. Character education requires moral leadership from both staff and students.

10. The school must recruit parents and community members as full partners in the character-building effort.

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

The Character Education Partnership

Appendix C

Cover Letters and Survey Instrument

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE

April 20, 2001

Sullivan County Extension Office
3258 Highway 126, Suite104
Blountville, TN 37617
Phone: (423) 279-2723
Fax: (423) 279-2731
www.utextension.utk.edu/sullivan
jwiebers@utk.edu

Dear Principal,

This is a hectic time of the school year, and I would have preferred to make this request much earlier in the school year, but circumstances have only provided this limited opportunity.

These packets contain surveys that will allow us to measure and compare the impact of the CHARACTER COUNTS**!** program in our area schools. I have secured permission from the director of your school system to conduct this study.

Completing the survey is voluntary and demographic information will be not be published in any format that would allow school systems, schools, teachers, or individuals to be identified.

I would appreciate your help with three things:

- **Distribute survey packets to each teacher, guidance counselor, and administrator**
- **Remind them on Friday, April 27 and again on Monday, April 30 to return completed surveys to the school office by Tuesday, May 1.**
- **Collect the completed surveys in the school office**

I will come by your school on Tuesday, May 1 or Wednesday, May 2 to pick up the surveys.

If you have any questions, you may reach me at: 279-2723 or by e-mail: jwiebers@utk.edu

Thank You,



Justin Wiebers

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COUNTY GOVERNMENTS COOPERATING
The Agriculture Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability, or veteran status and is an Equal Opportunity employer.

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE

Sullivan County Extension Office
3258 Highway 126, Suite104
Blountville, TN 37617
Phone: (423) 279-2723
Fax: (423) 279-2731
www.utextension.utk.edu/sullivan
jwiebers@utk.edu

Dear Educator;

I am pleased to invite you to participate in a local study of the effectiveness of the CHARACTER COUNTS! program in our area elementary schools. The purpose of this study is to see if there is a relationship between the CHARACTER COUNTS! activities conducted by a school, and the behavior of that school's students.

While your school may not be involved in CHARACTER COUNTS! or may only be involved on a limited basis, your input will be valuable! Of course, your participation is completely voluntary, but the direct insight you can provide will be incredibly useful as educators and the community struggle with the responsibility of improving and supporting character education.

The following survey should only take about twenty minutes to complete. It is composed of four sections:

- **Demographic Information:** will only be used to compile data; not for identification purposes
- **School Involvement:** will determine what activities and at what level your school participated
- **Your Involvement:** will allow you to record your experiences and perceptions
- **Your Students:** will allow you to record the behavior you've seen in your students.

I would appreciate if you could please complete and return this survey using the enclosed envelope **before April 20.**

I appreciate your time in sharing your knowledge and experiences related to CHARACTER COUNTS! at your school. The information you provide will be kept confidential, and will only be used for the purposes of this study. The identification of individual schools or classrooms will not be published in the findings so please feel comfortable in reporting your most accurate answers.

Thank You,



Justin Wiebers

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COUNTY GOVERNMENTS COOPERATING
The Agriculture Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability, or veteran status and is an Equal Opportunity employer.

Survey of CHARACTER COUNTS! in Elementary Schools

The following survey should take about twenty minutes to complete. Please share your knowledge and experiences related to the CHARACTER COUNTS! program at your school. If your school is not involved in CHARACTER COUNTS! activities, please reflect that through your responses. This data *will* be useful. Please read each question carefully. Some questions refer to character education in general (not just CHARACTER COUNTS!) or are related to your students knowledge or behavior regardless of programs they have experienced.

The information you provide will be kept confidential, and will only be used for the purposes of this study. Names of individual schools and/or classrooms will not be published.

You may use either a pen or pencil to mark your responses.

Example:

- ● Correctly
- ◎ Incorrectly

Demographic Information

Please fill in the circle next to your school.

Bristol
- ○ Anderson
- ○ Avoca
- ○ Central
- ○ Fairmount
- ○ Haynesfield
- ○ Holston View

Kingsport
- ○ Jackson
- ○ Jefferson
- ○ Johnson
- ○ Kennedy
- ○ Lincoln
- ○ Roosevelt
- ○ Washington

Sullivan County
- ○ Akard
- ○ Blountville
- ○ Bluff City
- ○ Brookside
- ○ Cedar Grove
- ○ Central Heights
- ○ East Cherokee
- ○ Emmett
- ○ Gravely
- ○ Gunnings
- ○ Holston
- ○ Indian Springs
- ○ Kingsley
- ○ Mary Hughes
- ○ Miller Perry
- ○ Rock Springs
- ○ Sullivan
- ○ Valley Pike
- ○ Weaver

Please fill in the circle next to the grade(s) you work with.
- ○ Kindergarten
- ○ First Grade
- ○ Second Grade
- ○ Third Grade
- ○ Fourth Grade
- ○ Fifth Grade
- ○ Sixth Grade
- ○ Non-Grade Level Assignment (Principals etc.)

Please fill in the circle next to the best description of your position.
- ○ Classroom Teacher
- ○ Teacher Assistant
- ○ Special Education
- ○ Guidance Counselor
- ○ Administrator
- ○ Another type of Position

Your School's Involvement

Please select the description that most closely describes your school's involvement in the CHARACTER COUNTS! program this year.

1 **What percentage of the teachers and administrators at your school have participated in an hour or more of CHARACTER COUNTS! training in the past 12 months?**

- O None
- O Up to 25%
- O 26-50%
- O 51-75%
- O More than 75%

Comments: _____.

2 **What percentage of the staff members (i.e. secretaries, janitors, cafeteria workers, bus drivers) at your school have participated in an hour or more of CHARACTER COUNTS! training in the past 12 months?**

- O None
- O Up to 25%
- O 26-50%
- O 51-75%
- O More than 75%

Comments: _____.

3 **Which lessons from the "Exercising Character" curriculum have your students participated in this year? (Select all that apply)**

- O None
- O Trustworthiness
- O Respect
- O Responsibility
- O Fairness
- O Caring
- O Citizenship
- O Decision Making

Comments: _____.

4 **What percentage of the teachers in your school take responsibility for teaching about the Six Pillars of Character?**

- O None
- O Up to 25%
- O 26-50%
- O 51-75%
- O More than 75%

Comments: _____.

5 **What percentage of the staff members in your school take responsibility for reinforcing the Six Pillars of Character?**

O None
O Up to 25%
O 26-50%
O 51-75%
O More than 75%
Comments: _____.

6 **What percentage of the administrators in your school take responsibility for reinforcing the Six Pillars of Character?**

O None
O Up to 25%
O 26-50%
O 51-75%
O More than 75%
Comments: _____.

7 **Does your school emphasize individual Pillars of Character on a school-wide basis at different times? (i.e. Pillar of the Week or Pillar of the Month)**

O No
O Yes
Comments: _____.

8 **How often does your school deliver to students, school-wide CHARACTER COUNTS! related messages (through intercom, video, written or other announcements)?**

O Never
O Rarely
O Monthly
O Weekly
O Daily
Comments: _____.

9 **What percentage of school-wide functions, events or activities is CHARACTER COUNTS!, or the Six Pillars of Character, deliberately promoted through written or spoken communications?**

O None
O Up to 25%
O 26-50%
O 51-75%
O More than 75%
Comments: _____.

10 **Does your school have any lasting/permanent CHARACTER COUNTS! displays (murals, sculptures, engravings, etc.)?**

O No
O Yes
Comments: _____.

11 **How often has each student been involved in creating/providing displays (posters, banners, bulletin boards, art projects, t-shirts, etc.) about CHARACTER COUNTS! this school year?**

O Never
O Once
O Two to five times
O Six or more times
Comments: _____.

12 **How often were faculty and/or staff members involved in creating/providing displays (posters, banners, bulletin boards, art projects, t-shirts, etc.) about CHARACTER COUNTS! this school year?**

O Never
O Once
O Two to five times
O Six or more times
Comments: _____.

13 **How often were parents involved in creating/providing displays (posters, banners, bulletin boards, art projects, t-shirts, etc.) about CHARACTER COUNTS! this school year?**

O Never
O Once
O Two to five times
O Six or more times
Comments: _____.

14 **How often have older students worked with younger students on CHARACTER COUNTS! activities this school year?**

O Never
O Once
O Two to five times
O Six or more times
Comments: _____.

15 **What percentage of school rules and policies have been revised to reflect the Six Pillars of Character?**

O None
O Up to 25%
O 26-50%
O 51-75%
O More than 75%
Comments: _____.

16 **What percentage of disciplinary actions toward students have made reference to one or more Pillars of Character this school year?**

O None
O Up to 25%
O 26-50%
O 51-75%
O More than 75%
Comments: _____.

17 **What percentage of students have been recognized for positive behavior related to the Pillars of Character this school year?**

O None
O Up to 25%
O 26-50%
O 51-75%
O More than 75%
Comments: _____.

18 **How often have parents been informed about CHARACTER COUNTS! efforts in your school this school year?**

O Never
O Once
O Two to five times
O Six or more times
Comments: _____.

19 **Do parents support CHARACTER COUNTS! efforts in your school?**

O No Support
O Little Support
O Some Support
O Strong Support
O Very Strong Support
Comments: _____.

20 **Does the community support CHARACTER COUNTS! efforts in your school?**

O No Support
O Little Support
O Some Support
O Strong Support
O Very Strong Support
Comments: _____.

Your Involvement

Please share your personal experiences from the current school year and opinions related to character education and CHARACTER COUNTS!

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I believe character education is an important part of my work.					
2	Other teachers at my school believe character education is an important part of their work.					
3	I believe CHARACTER COUNTS! is an effective program.					
4	Other teachers at my school believe CHARACTER COUNTS! is an effective program.					
5	CHARACTER COUNTS! has positively affected my classroom atmosphere.					
6	CHARACTER COUNTS! has positively affected our school atmosphere					
7	CHARACTER COUNTS! takes up valuable time that should be used for other purposes.					
8	One of the Six Pillars of Character comes up in discussions each day in my classroom.					
9	I have fewer discipline problems because of CHARACTER COUNTS!					
10	I show my students more respect because of **CHARACTER COUNTS!**					
11	CHARACTER COUNTS! has positively affected my own behavior.					
12	I have taught lessons specifically on CHARACTER COUNTS! or the Pillars of Character.					
13	I have incorporated teaching the Six Pillars of Character into my existing curriculum.					
14	CHARACTER COUNTS! is an integral part of our school atmosphere.					
15	CHARACTER COUNTS! is a fundamental part of the curriculum in our school **.**					

Your Students

Please consider the students you are working with this year as you complete the following section.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	My students could explain each of the Six Pillars of Character.					
2	My students could give an example of caring from their own lives.					
3	My students could give an example of respect from their own lives.					
4	My students could give an example of trustworthiness from their own lives.					
5	My students could give an example of citizenship from their own lives.					
6	My students could give an example of responsibility from their own lives.					
7	My students could give an example of fairness from their own lives.					
8	My students talk with their families about having good character.					
9	Fighting is a problem with my students.					
10	My students are responsible in returning homework and/or other assignments.					
11	Students I work with demonstrate empathy/caring for each other.					
12	Students I work with demonstrate self control/self discipline.					
13	Students I work with demonstrate good decision making skills.					
14	My students respect adults.					
15	My students respect each other.					
16	Stealing/theft is a problem with my students.					
17	My students demonstrate concern for people in the community.					
18	Lying/dishonesty is a problem with my students.					
19	My students demonstrate concern for the environment.					
20	Cheating is a problem among my students.					
21	CHARACTER COUNTS! has a positive effect on my students' behavior.					
22	My students exhibit positive character traits so they can receive recognition.					
23	My students exhibit positive character traits because they believe in doing what is right.					

Appendix D

Expert Panel Members, Cover Letter, and Questionnaire

Expert Panel Members

Mrs. Peggy Adkins ..... Faculty Member and Curriculum Author,
National CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition

Mr. Johnny Arceneaux ..... National CHARACTER COUNTS! Trainer
Louisiana State University Ag Center

Ms. Kelly Coggsdale ..... CHARACTER COUNTS! Researcher,
Virginia Cooperative Extension

Officer Herb Gould ..... Humphreys County CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition Member
Waverly, Tennessee Police Department

Mr. Donald Hammatt ..... National CHARACTER COUNTS! Trainer
Louisiana State University Ag Center

Mrs. Carrie Marchant ..... CHARACTER COUNTS! Director,
First Tennessee Human Resource Agency

Ms. Becky Murray ..... Guidance Counselor,
Bluff City Elementary School

Ms. Judy Taylor ..... CHARACTER COUNTS! Researcher,
University of Illinois Extension

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE

January 19, 2001

Sullivan County Extension Office
3258 Highway 126, Suite104
Blountville, TN 37617
Phone: (423) 279-2723
Fax: (423) 279-2731
www.utextension.utk.edu/sullivan
jwiebers@utk.edu

Name
Address
City State Zip

Dear _____:

I would appreciate 30 minutes of your time in sharing your knowledge and experiences with CHARACTER COUNTS!$_{sm}$ and character education.

Your responses will be utilized to develop a weighted survey. This survey will seek to quantify levels of school involvement in teaching CHARACTER COUNTS!. This data will be analyzed against teachers' perceptions of their students' behavior to see if there is a correlation between the level of school efforts to teach CHARACTER COUNTS! and the behavior of the students.

Please consider each item individually, and give it a ranking between 1 and 10 based on the importance that item plays in imparting good character to elementary school students. A ranking of a "1" would mean the item has no importance in teaching character. A ranking of a "10" would indicate the item is absolutely essential to teaching good character. There is also space after each question for you to list any concerns or comments you might have about the relevance, terminology, etc. of the question.

I understand your time is limited and valuable, but I would appreciate if you could please complete and return this survey using the enclosed envelope before February 9. I plan to have the results of the entire study available by this summer, and will be happy to share them with you if you wish.

Please feel free to share your comments about individual items, overlooked items, or the survey as a whole. Again, thank you for your time investment in the evaluation of the CHARACTER COUNTS! program.

Sincerely,



Justin Wiebers

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COUNTY GOVERNMENTS COOPERATING
The Agriculture Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability, or veteran status and is an Equal Opportunity employer.

Importance of School Efforts in Teaching CHARACTER COUNTS!

Please rate each of the following items based on its importance in teaching CHARACTER COUNTS! in an elementary school. Please mark the circle you believe is most appropriate.

1 Teachers and administrators participating in one or more hours of CHARACTER COUNTS! training each year

Not at all important				Of Medium Importance					Extremely Important
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩

Comments: _____.
_____.
_____.

2 Staff members (i.e. secretaries, janitors, cafeteria workers, bus drivers) participating in one or more hours of CHARACTER COUNTS! training each year

Not at all important				Of Medium Importance					Extremely Important
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩

Comments: _____.
_____.
_____.

3 Utilizing lessons from the "Exercising Character" curriculum

Not at all important				Of Medium Importance					Extremely Important
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩

Comments: _____.
_____.
_____.

4 Teachers taking responsibility for teaching the Six Pillars of Character

Not at all important				Of Medium Importance					Extremely Important
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩

Comments: _____.
_____.
_____.

5 Staff members taking responsibility for reinforcing the Six Pillars of Character

Not at all important				Of Medium Importance					Extremely Important
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩

Comments: _____.
_____.
_____.

6 Administrators taking responsibility for reinforcing the Six Pillars of Character

Not at all important				Of Medium Importance					Extremely Important
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩

Comments: _____.
_____.
_____.

7 Emphasizing individual Pillars of Character on a school-wide basis

Not at all important				Of Medium Importance					Extremely Important
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩

Comments: _____.
_____.
_____.

8 Daily school-wide CHARACTER COUNTS! related messages (through intercom, video, written or other announcements)

Not at all important				Of Medium Importance					Extremely Important
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩

Comments: _____.
_____.
_____.

9 School-wide functions, events or activities with CHARACTER COUNTS! or the Six Pillars of Character deliberately promoted through written or spoken communications

Not at all important				Of Medium Importance					Extremely Important
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩

Comments: _____.
_____.
_____.

10 Lasting CHARACTER COUNTS! displays (murals, sculptures, engravings, etc.)

Not at all important				Of Medium Importance					Extremely Important
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩

Comments: _____.
_____.
_____.

11 Student involvement in creating/providing displays (posters, banners, bulletin boards, art projects, t-shirts, etc.) about character for their classroom or the school

Not at all important				Of Medium Importance					Extremely Important
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩

Comments: _____.
_____.
_____.

12 Faculty and/or staff member involvement in creating/providing displays (posters, banners, bulletin boards, art projects, t-shirts, etc.) about character for their classroom or the school

Not at all important				Of Medium Importance					Extremely Important
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩

Comments: _____.
_____.
_____.

13 Parent involvement in creating/providing displays (posters, banners, bulletin boards, art projects, t-shirts, etc.) about character for their student's classroom or the school

Not at all important				Of Medium Importance					Extremely Important
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩

Comments: _____.
_____.
_____.

14 Older students working with younger students on CHARACTER COUNTS! activities

Not at all important				Of Medium Importance					Extremely Important
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩

Comments: _____.
_____.
_____.

15 School rules and policies revised to reflect the Six Pillars of Character

Not at all important				Of Medium Importance					Extremely Important
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩

Comments: _____.
_____.
_____.

16 Disciplinary actions toward students making reference to one or more Pillars of Character

Not at all important				Of Medium Importance					Extremely Important
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩

Comments: _____.
_____.
_____.

17 Student recognition for positive behavior related to the Pillars of Character

Not at all important				Of Medium Importance					Extremely Important
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩

Comments: _____.
_____.
_____.

18 Keeping parents informed about CHARACTER COUNTS! efforts in the school

Not at all important				Of Medium Importance					Extremely Important
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩

Comments: _____.
_____.
_____.

19 Parents' support of CHARACTER COUNTS! efforts in the school

Not at all important				Of Medium Importance					Extremely Important
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩

Comments: _____.
_____.
_____.

20 Community support of CHARACTER COUNTS! efforts in the school

Not at all important				Of Medium Importance					Extremely Important
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩

Comments: _____.
_____.
_____.

Appendix E

Cover Letters and Pilot Survey Instrument

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE

March 3, 2001

Sullivan County Extension Office
3258 Highway 126, Suite104
Blountville, TN 37617
Phone: (423) 279-2723
Fax: (423) 279-2731
www.utextension.utk.edu/sullivan
jwiebers@utk.edu

[Pilot Elementary School]
[Sevier County Tennessee]

Dear Mr. [Principal]

This letter is to follow up on our phone call Monday about piloting a study of the CHARACTER COUNTS! program. As we discussed, I am enclosing seven surveys for you, your guidance counselor, and five teachers. I would appreciate if you would distribute and complete the surveys so I can pick them up this Friday afternoon, March 9th.

The data and feedback about the questions your school provides will assist in the development of this survey instrument. All personal and specific school information obtained through this questionnaire will be kept confidential. Names of individual schools and individual educator demographics will not be published in the findings and will only be used to tabulate test data.

I would be pleased to answer any questions or concerns you may have and look forward to seeing your responses. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Justin Wiebers

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COUNTY GOVERNMENTS COOPERATING
The Agriculture Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability, or veteran status and is an Equal Opportunity employer.

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE

March 3, 2001

Sullivan County Extension Office
3258 Highway 126, Suite104
Blountville, TN 37617
Phone: (423) 279-2723
Fax: (423) 279-2731
www.utextension.utk.edu/sullivan
jwiebers@utk.edu

This is the letter and survey that will be circulated to elementary school educators. Please complete the survey as directed. Then, if you any suggestions to improve clarity or accuracy share your comments and corrections everywhere you see fit.
Thanks for your assistance in "correcting" my work!

Dear Educator;

I am pleased to invite you to participate in a local study of the effectiveness of the CHARACTER COUNTS! program in our area elementary schools. The purpose of this study is to see if there is a relationship between the CHARACTER COUNTS! activities conducted by a school, and the behavior of that school's students.

While your school may not be involved in CHARACTER COUNTS! or may only be involved on a limited basis, your input will be valuable! Of course, your participation is completely voluntary, but the direct insight you can provide will be incredibly useful as educators and the community struggle with the responsibility of improving and supporting character education.

The following survey should only take about twenty minutes to complete. It is composed of four sections:

Demographic Information: will only be used to compile data; not for identification purposes
School Involvement: will determine what activities and at what level your school participated
Your Involvement: will allow you to record your experiences and perceptions
Your Students: will allow you to record the behavior you've seen in your students.

I would appreciate if you could please complete and return this survey using the enclosed envelope before Friday, March 9.

I appreciate your time in sharing your knowledge and experiences related to CHARACTER COUNTS! at your school. The information you provide will be kept confidential, and will only be used for the purposes of this study. The identification of individual schools or classrooms will not be published in the findings so please feel comfortable in reporting your most accurate answers.

Thank You,

Justin Wiebers

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COUNTY GOVERNMENTS COOPERATING
The Agriculture Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability, or veteran status and is an Equal Opportunity employer.

Survey of CHARACTER COUNTS!$_{sm}$ in Elementary Schools

The following survey should take about twenty minutes to complete. Please share your knowledge and experiences related to the CHARACTER COUNTS! program at your school. If your school is not involved in CHARACTER COUNTS! activities, please reflect that through your responses. This data *will* be useful when compared to other schools efforts.

Please read each question carefully. Some questions refer to character education in general (not just CHARACTER COUNTS!) or are related to your students knowledge or behavior regardless of programs they have experienced.

The information you provide will be kept confidential, and will only be used for the purposes of this study. Names of individual schools and/or classrooms will not be published.

You may use either a pen or pencil to mark your responses.

Example:
Correctly
Incorrectly

This pilot version of the survey provides space for your comments but feel free to mark anywhere you want to express your concerns.

Demographic Information

Please fill in the circle next to your school.

Jones Cove Elementary
Northview Elementary
Pigeon Forge Primary

Please fill in the circle next to the grade(s) you work with.

Kindergarten
First Grade
Second Grade
Third Grade
Fourth Grade
Fifth Grade
Non-Grade Level Assignment

Please fill in the circle next to the best description of your position.

Classroom Teacher
Special Education
Guidance Counselor
Administrator
Another type of Position

Your School's Involvement

Please select the description that most closely describes your school's involvement in the CHARACTER COUNTS! program this year.

1 What percentage of the teachers and administrators at your school have participated in an hour or more of CHARACTER COUNTS! training in the past 12 months?

O None
O Up to 25%
O 26-50%
O 51-75%
O 75% or more

Comments or concerns about this question: _____.

_____.

2 What percentage of the staff members (i.e. secretaries, janitors, cafeteria workers, bus drivers) at your school have participated in an hour or more of CHARACTER COUNTS! training in the past 12 months?

O None
O Up to 25%
O 26-50%
O 51-75%
O 75% or more

Comments or concerns about this question: _____.

_____.

3 Which lessons from the "Exercising Character" curriculum have your students participated in this year? (Select all that apply)

O None
O Trustworthiness
O Respect
O Responsibility
O Fairness
O Caring
O Citizenship
O Decision Making

Comments or concerns about this question: .

_____.

4 What percentage of the teachers in your school take responsibility for teaching about the Six Pillars of Character?

O None
O Up to 25%
O 26-50%
O 51-75%
O 75% or more

Comments or concerns about this question: _____.

_____.

5 What percentage of the staff members in your school take responsibility for reinforcing the Six Pillars of Character?

O None
O Up to 25%
O 26-50%
O 51-75%
O 75% or more

Comments or concerns about this question: _____.

_____.

6 **What percentage of the administrators in your school take responsibility for reinforcing the Six Pillars of Character?**

O None
O Up to 25%
O 26-50%
O 51-75%
O 75% or more

Comments or concerns about this question: _____.
_____.

7 **Does your school emphasize individual Pillars of Character on a school-wide basis at different times? (i.e. Pillar of the Week or Pillar of the Month)**

O No
O Yes

Comments or concerns about this question: _____.
_____.

8 **How often does your school have school-wide CHARACTER COUNTS! related messages (through intercom, video, written or other announcements)?**

O Never
O Rarely
O Monthly
O Weekly
O Daily

Comments or concerns about this question: _____.
_____.

9 **What percentage of school-wide functions, events or activities is CHARACTER COUNTS!, or the Six Pillars of Character, deliberately promoted through written or spoken communications?**

O Never
O Up to 25%
O 26-50%
O 51-75%
O 75% or more

Comments or concerns about this question: _____.
_____.

10 **Does your school have any lasting/permanent CHARACTER COUNTS! displays (murals, sculptures, engravings, etc.)?**

O No
O Yes

Comments or concerns about this question: _____.
_____.

11 **How often have students been involved in creating/providing displays (posters, banners, bulletin boards, art projects, t-shirts, etc.) about CHARACTER COUNTS! this school year?**

O Never
O Once
O Two to five times
O Six or more times

Comments or concerns about this question: _____.
_____.

12 How often were faculty and/or staff members involved in creating/providing displays (posters, banners, bulletin boards, art projects, t-shirts, etc.) about CHARACTER COUNTS! this school year?

O Never
O Once
O Two to five times
O Six or more times

Comments or concerns about this question: _____.
_____.

13 How often were parents involved in creating/providing displays (posters, banners, bulletin boards, art projects, t-shirts, etc.) about CHARACTER COUNTS! this school year?

O Never
O Once
O Two to five times
O Six or more times

Comments or concerns about this question: _____.
_____.

14 How often have older students worked with younger students on CHARACTER COUNTS! activities this school year?

O Never
O Once
O Two to five times
O Six or more times

Comments or concerns about this question: _____.
_____.

15 What percentage of school rules and policies have been revised to reflect the Six Pillars of Character?

O None
O Up to 25%
O 26-50%
O 51-75%
O 75% or more

Comments or concerns about this question: _____.
_____.

16 What percentage of disciplinary actions toward students have made reference to one or more Pillars of Character this school year?

O None
O Up to 25%
O 26-50%
O 51-75%
O 75% or more

Comments or concerns about this question: _____.
_____.

17 What percentage of students have been recognized for positive behavior related to the Pillars of Character this school year?

- ○ None
- ○ Up to 25%
- ○ 26-50%
- ○ 51-75%
- ○ 75% or more

Comments or concerns about this question: _____.
_____.

18 How often have parents been informed about CHARACTER COUNTS! efforts in your school this school year?

- ○ Never
- ○ Once
- ○ Two to five times
- ○ Six or more times

Comments or concerns about this question: _____.
_____.

19 Do parents support CHARACTER COUNTS! efforts in your school?

- ○ No
- ○ Yes

Comments or concerns about this question: _____.
_____.

20 Does the community support CHARACTER COUNTS! efforts in your school?

- ○ No
- ○ Yes

Comments or concerns about this question: _____.
_____.

Your Involvement

Please share your personal experiences and opinions related to character education and CHARACTER COUNTS! over the current school year.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I believe character education is an important part of my work. *Comments or concerns about this question* _____.					
2	Other teachers at my school believe character education is an important part of their work. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
3	I believe CHARACTER COUNTS! is an effective program. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
4	Other teachers at my school believe CHARACTER COUNTS! is an effective program. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
5	CHARACTER COUNTS! has positively affected my classroom atmosphere. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
6	CHARACTER COUNTS! has positively affected our school atmosphere *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
7	CHARACTER COUNTS! takes up valuable time that should be used for other purposes. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
8	One of the Six Pillars of Character comes up in discussions each day in my classroom. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
9	I have fewer discipline problems because of CHARACTER COUNTS! *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
10	I show my students more respect because of CHARACTER COUNTS! *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
11	Teaching CHARACTER COUNTS! has positively affected my own behavior. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					

12	I have taught at least one lesson specifically on CHARACTER COUNTS! or one of the Pillars of Character. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
13	I have incorporated teaching the Six Pillars of Character into my existing curriculum. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
14	CHARACTER COUNTS! is an integral part of our school atmosphere. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
15	CHARACTER COUNTS! is an fundamental part of the curriculum in our school . *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					

Your Students

Please consider the students you are working with this year as you complete the following section.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	My students could explain each of the Six Pillars of Character. *Comments or concerns about this question* _____.					
2	Students could give an example of caring from their own lives. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
3	Students could give an example of respect from their own lives. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
4	Students could give an example of trustworthiness from their own lives. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
5	Students could give an example of citizenship from their own lives. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
6	Students could give an example of responsibility from their own lives. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
7	Students could give an example of fairness from their own lives. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
8	Students talk with their families about having good character. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
9	Fighting among students is a problem. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
10	Students are responsible in returning homework assignments. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
11	Students demonstrate empathy/caring for each other. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
12	Students demonstrate self control/self discipline. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
13	Students demonstrate good decision making skills. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					

14	Students respect adults. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
15	Students respect each other. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
16	Stealing/theft is a problem. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
17	Students demonstrate concern for people in the community. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
18	Lying/dishonesty is a problem. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
19	Students demonstrate concern for the environment. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
20	Cheating is a problem. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
21	CHARACTER COUNTS! has a positive effect on students' behavior. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
22	Students exhibit positive character traits so they can receive recognition. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					
23	Students exhibit positive character traits because they believe in doing what is right. *Comments or concerns about this question:* _____.					

Appendix F

Letter Requesting Permission from School Systems

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE

February 19, 2001

Sullivan County Extension Office
3258 Highway 126, Suite104
Blountville, TN 37617
Phone: (423) 279-2723
Fax: (423) 279-2731
www.utextension.utk.edu/sullivan
jwiebers@utk.edu

School System Director
Address
City, TN 376__

Dear _____:

For the past several years, the Sullivan County CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition has been committed to helping the _____ Schools implement activities focused on helping students develop the positive values of Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship.

As with all educational programs, putting forth effort and seeing changes in knowledge or behavior are not always correlated. That is why I am conducting a study to evaluate the effectiveness of the CHARACTER COUNTS! program in our schools. I plan to measure school involvement in teaching CHARACTER COUNTS! and compare it to behavior of that school's students.

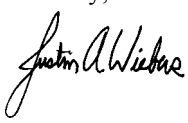
I would appreciate your permission to distribute the enclosed questionnaire to all elementary school teachers, administrators and guidance counselors in the _____ School System. The questionnaire will ask about efforts at their school to teach and promote the Six Pillars of Character. The questionnaire will also ask educators to describe their individual efforts and perceptions of the program. In the final section, educators will be asked to describe the behaviors they observe in the students with whom they work.

All personal and specific school information obtained through this questionnaire will be kept confidential. Names of individual schools and individual educator demographics will not be published in the findings and will only be used to tabulate data.

With your permission, I would like to deliver questionnaire packets to the schools in the middle of March so that educators who choose to participate can mail it back to me before the end of April.

I would be pleased to answer any questions or concerns you may have and look forward to hearing your response. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



Justin Wiebers

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COUNTY GOVERNMENTS COOPERATING
The Agriculture Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability, or veteran status and is an Equal Opportunity employer.

Vita

Justin Wiebers has been a 4-H Agent for The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service in Sullivan County since 1996. His work utilizes agriculture projects and other tools, like CHARACTER COUNTS! to help youth develop into productive citizens. Justin's 4-H career began when he was nine years old showing dairy cattle on the plains of eastern Colorado. He served as the State 4-H President in 1991 and graduated cum laude from Colorado State University with a Bachelor's Degree in Agriculture Extension Education.

In college, Justin stayed involved with 4-H as a volunteer and was active in Collegiate 4-H. He was selected as the National Collegiate 4-H Intern-Director with the United States Department of Agriculture and National 4-H Council in Washington, D.C. This internship provided his first experience with CHARACTER COUNTS! as he helped pilot the "Exercising Character" curriculum at the national kickoff in October of 1994.

Justin has served as President and Vice President of the Sullivan County CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition and has been involved in training more than 400 educators in Northeast Tennessee.

Justin and his wife Kristey live in Kingsport, Tennessee.