

PeaceBuilders Program Implementation



case study - child

Wittmann Elementary School

"We are Wittmann and We are PeaceBuilders"

How a Common Identity Helped One School Reach Extraordinary Success

Problem:

In the spring of 2008, Wittmann Elementary School in Cerritos, California had an alarming spike in behavioral problems and a shocking 150 percent increase in student suspensions. These findings did not reflect the school's long-standing reputation for producing "excellent students, compassionate beings and responsible citizens."

Solution:

Rather than dismissing the data as a "statistical quirk" the staff at Wittmann took action and formed a school committee to find a systemic program that promoted positive behaviors for all K-6 students. After receiving some powerful testimonials about the comprehensive, science-based and research-validated PeaceBuilders program from a nearby school, the solution was clear: PeaceBuilders staff development and curriculum. Prior to the 2008-2009 school year, all Wittmann staff members were trained on how to use the PeaceBuilders approach of a common identity and language, as well as the science-based curriculum to create a more positive and productive learning environment. The once, "We are Wittmann," slogan was soon replaced with "We are Wittmann and We are PeaceBuilders."

Results:

Within the first two years of PeaceBuilders implementation, Wittmann dramatically reduced suspensions by approximately 50 percent. And ZERO suspensions have been reported for the 2011-2012 school year as of January.

Qualitative indicators of the program's success consist of comments gleaned from staff, parent and community meetings and surveys. Wittmann staff members appreciate the program and unanimously support its continued implementation. In fact, Wittmann has since expanded their efforts by partnering with a marketing firm to help Wittmann "market peace" at school and in the local community.

"One of the most impactful indicators of success since implementing PeaceBuilders occurred at our end of the year assembly where one student, who because of his dedication and enthusiasm, was selected to speak about his PeaceBuilders experience. Before attending Wittmann, he had been removed from four other schools within the district due to violent behavior. It is only at the proud PeaceBuilders site of Wittmann where he not only found peace, he promotes it."

-Patrick Walker, Principal

About PeaceBuilders:

PeaceBuilders is a science-based, research-validated violence prevention curriculum and staff development program for grades pre-k to 12. Its essence is a common language -- six principles, taught, modeled and practiced. These same principles set behavioral expectations, reduce aggression, and transform the climate and culture of any environment to one which is cooperative, productive and academically successful.

Contact:

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results:

- **50% decrease in suspensions**
- **98% of parents surveyed agree Wittmann is "a safe place"**
- **94% of parents surveyed agree Wittmann students are "well behaved"**
- **95% of families surveyed give the school an overall grade of "A"**