

"To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society."
-Theodore Roosevelt



A Case Study on the Impact of the PeaceBuilders program on
Character Education for Students at Winchester Elementary School

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Dana L. Childs

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DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost I am dedicating this project to my sister Nikki. Your life was taken entirely too soon. There are no words to describe the emotions of attempting to complete this project with a heavy heart and tear-filled eyes. I have always looked up to you, big sis, for strength and leadership and while you are now an angel, your strength, which became clearly evident during your battle against breast cancer and later leukemia, has truly guided me through this process. One of life's greatest character traits is strength, therefore it is most appropriate that my work be dedicated to you. I pray that my life will honor your memory and make you proud. I love you big sis. *Keep dancin'.*

Secondly, I wish to thank and honor my parents - James and Ann Childs. You have always been my "rock" and my biggest fans. I am the woman I am today because of your sacrifice and dedication to my life. Your guidance and wisdom have always helped me excel, and through our most difficult times, your love and support was unwavering. God blessed me with love and grace when he gave you to me as parents. I love you both immensely.

Dennis and Diane, it is just us now. Thank you for being, not just siblings, but also my best friends. As did the African warriors of our heritage, we will persevere. I love you bro. and sis.

Massimiliano. E un mondo marcio. Grazie per essere qui in tutti quei momenti. I giorni trascorsi nel nostro viaggio attraverso la vita, mi ha insegnato cose indimenticabili. Tu non hai idea de quanto tu sei prezioso per me. Arruuuugh! "Step Back" perche questo come si fa! Ti amo.

And a final "thank you" to my Winchester family. Melody you truly are the "Records Queen". God Bless. Roe, Thank you for your commitment. You're the man!

ABSTRACT

Administrators, teachers, parents and other school personnel surmise that in order for teachers to effectively and positively impact students instructional time, student behavior management must be executed masterfully. Without successful student behavior management, teacher instruction falters. Throughout the history of education severe forms of student discipline such as corporal punishment became not only problematic, but more importantly, illegal. Accordingly, the trend shifted discipline to positive forms of student behavior management. These positive behavior modification techniques are often implemented and employed through character education programs. The purpose of this case study is to examine the impact of PeaceBuilders, a character education program, on student behavior at Winchester Elementary School.

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INTRODUCTION

"To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society."

--Theodore Roosevelt

The above quote by historian, author, naturalist, explorer and the youngest U.S. President, Theodore Roosevelt, eloquently expresses my pedagogical and personal philosophy. As an educator and child advocate, the entire development and maturity of students is my ultimate goal. I want students to be successful academically and respectful and responsible citizens in society. It takes only to live daily for one to realize the necessity for order and safety not only in our local public school system, but within a global context as well. It was early in my career as an educator that it became clear that the public school system is a primary source of socialization, as it reflects the behavior of human beings in societies across the globe, inclusive of peace and violence.

With the inception of NCLB, much of the attention on public schools has been placed on student and teacher accountability. Teacher pacing guides, standards-based curriculum, data analysis and benchmark assessments have become part of the daily language and practices of educators. Its prevalence is discussed in the political arena at both the state and federal levels. The other prevalent conversation by school personnel is focused on behavior management and student discipline. It is my contention that safety and order are not only necessary to create an environment that cultivates learning, but it is also an essential element in the development and socialization of individual students into productive citizens. As Roosevelt affirms, focusing only on the education of students in core curriculums such as language, mathematics, social studies and the sciences, without also educating them in moral value, simply indoctrinates individuals who will jeopardize and undermine our society.

Personal Context

Throughout my education, I have been blessed with the good fortune of having highly talented and caring educators to guide my learning. Other than my parents, it has been teachers from whom I learned the meaning of respect, responsibility and a duty to contributing as a human being and citizen on this planet. Mrs. Kathleen Gordon, my first grade teacher was instrumental in setting the foundation upon which my desire for lifelong learning was built. She was caring. This taught me more than just phonics and word blends. It was her character traits that transcended her daily interactions with her students. I clearly remember her classroom as an orderly place with a safe atmosphere. In this atmosphere, I felt comfortable to open my mind to learning. Time spent to discipline students was minimal, which allowed time for optimal learning and instruction. As a youth in high school, my history teacher and basketball coach, Mrs. Selma Guzman, was influential in shaping my later experiences at school into positive life-learning and applicable entities. Civic virtue, personal responsibility and dignity were values that she reinforced through our interaction.

When I began my teaching career in 1993, I entered the field with the expectation of not only educating children in the basic “3 R’s - reading, ‘riting and ‘rithmetic’,” but my desire was to teach them to be “good people”. I had my very own “3 R’s” to manage behavior and build citizenship. My “three R’s” were: Respectful to all People, Responsible in all Places and Resourceful at all times. My goal was to be a role model to students who lacked someone significant to rely on to care about their emotional, social and psychological education and maturity. I wanted to have a positive impact on my students and leave them with the knowledge and skills to be successful and productive people later in their lives. Little did I know how difficult an undertaking this would be.

What actually happened shocked my newly acquired, theory-based pedagogy. My first

year as a teacher reinforced my ever-present knowledge that youth need and require a sense of discipline and behavior management. Early in my career, much of my frustration was rooted in the numerous instructional minutes directed towards managing student behavior. I viewed this time as “wasted.” I often lamented, “I could be using this time to teach some required subject matter associated with testing and accountability.” Once I realized that the time spent disciplining students was not a true waste of time rather than an opportunity to teach students a moral or civic lesson, I began to utilize this time as such, and viewed it as time well spent. From this point forward, I developed ways to involve my students in responsibly managing their own behaviors. Prior to the invent of commercially packaged and marketed character education programs, teaching character education was intrinsic to my instructional practices.

In my capacity as an educator, I have taught every grade level from kindergarten to young adults and have worked with students with all different backgrounds and experiences. While living in Hawaii, my commission as a teacher afforded me the opportunity to work with a group of female youths the school system labeled as “severely emotionally disturbed.” Throughout all of these experiences and after twelve years in the field, the single thing that remains constant, in my mind, is the need to explicitly teach moral values because these universally accepted values assists in the management of student behavior which decreases the necessity for punitive discipline practices. Some may argue that character education lies outside the realm of my job as an educator, while others believe that educators, other than parents, possess the responsibility to instruct students in civic values. While this remains a controversial topic, the simple and inerasable fact is that I teach values everyday that I interact with my students. Over the years, I have been compelled to invent and/or redesign ways to teach my students moral and civic values that are utilized daily by successful persons in their community. It is with this background and conviction that I began my examination of character education programs and its impact of

character education on students and the resulting climate of the school campus. PeaceBuilders program is designed to teach character education to students in Grades K-5 at Winchester Elementary School.

Problem Statement

Educational researchers and practitioners both agree that overall student behavior management is essential to any effective school site. Classroom management and school wide discipline rank high among the many factors that influence student achievement and overall school effectiveness. Marzano states, “a safe and orderly environment is a critical aspect of effective schooling. A school that does not attend to this factor risks undermining all other efforts at school improvement” (p. 52). A commitment by all members of the staff to establishing and maintaining appropriate student behavior as a precursor to an effective learning environment is key. The lamentable, yet true, reality is that violence has increased in society and our schools are not immune from it. Recently, several high profile crimes of violence in public school have saddened and horrified the general public both nationally and internationally. No one is quick to forget the Columbine tragedy where two students armed with several guns opened fire on campus wounding and killing classmates. One can also easily recall the more recent Virginia Tech shooting which took 32 young lives. “In many school districts, concerns about violence have even surpassed academic achievement--traditionally the most persistent theme on the nation’s agenda--as the highest priority for reform and intervention” (Noguera, 2004, p. 189). Despite this concern and attention, no literature exists which affirms a single, commercially packaged program that addresses this ever-increasing problem.

Throughout the history of education the commentary about student conduct, discipline and behavior management have been areas of high concern. Without a doubt, there exists an historical and legal need for public schools to enforce certain rules. Since public school is a

microcosm of the larger society, laws must exist to ensure order. “A school campus without order is like a society on the verge of rebellion and anarchy” (Kemerer, Sansom and Kemerer, 2005, p. 325). Federal and state constitutions define the legal relationships between schools and the students. This provides the foundation upon which courts have established a common law with regards to the public school system. Alexander and Alexander (2005) assert,

the courts have recognized that in order for teachers to address the diversity of expectations placed upon them, they must be given sufficient latitude in the control of conduct of the school for an appropriate decorum and learning atmosphere to prevail. (p. 431)

Courts across the United States recognize *in loco parentis* as common law. *In loco parentis* translates into “in the place of the parent.” It endows the teacher with protecting the interests of the child in the public school environment. An early Missouri court defines the principle in the following manner,

the teacher of a school site as to the children of his school, while under his care, occupies, for the time being, the position of parent or guardian, and it is his right and duty not only to enforce discipline to preserve order and to teach, but also to look after the morals, the health and the safety of his pupils...(Alexander and Alexander, p. 432)

Furthermore, state legislation that supports the principle *in loco parentis*, as a means to manage student behavior, lays the foundation for the implementation and use of character building programs such as PeaceBuilders. Article 1, Section 28, of the California Constitution specifies that all students and staff of public schools possess the “inalienable right to attend campuses which are safe, secure and peaceful” (Kemerer, Sansome and Kemerer, p. 323).

Following extensive research studies, theorists as well as practitioners discovered that safe, orderly and well-managed schools, according to Cotton, demonstrate the following characteristics:

1. commitment by all members of the staff to establishing and maintaining appropriate student behavior as a precursor to an effective learning environment;
2. high behavioral expectations;
3. clear and broad-based rules;
4. warm school climate;
5. a visible and supportive administrator;
6. delegation of authority regarding discipline to teachers and
7. close ties to the community. (Cotton, 2006, p. 4)

These seven characteristics are key elements of a successful, safe and orderly learning environment. In addition, research has shown that social rewards such as frequent praise and smiling serves to reduce undesirable behavior. Cotton also cites the NAESP or The National Association of Elementary School Principals (1983), states “making school enjoyable and interesting for as many students as possible—for example, by changing instructional practices to accommodate a variety of learning styles—may dramatically decrease discipline problems” (p.4).

With this in mind, many educational program designers have reacted to the prevalence of school discipline problems by creating and marketing packaged character education programs which intend to bring about safe, orderly and well-managed schools by reducing misconduct and consequently increasing school order. One may ask, what exactly is character education and how should it be taught? Lickona (1991) defines character education as, “the deliberate, proactive effort to develop good character based on core virtues that are good for the individual and good for society” (p. 2). Furthermore, The California Department of Education recognizes the month of October as “Character Education Month” and describes this instruction as “resources to build and develop character in youth; [it] supports the core values of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship” (p. 1). Some view it as a positive means to manage student behavior while simultaneously teaching moral and civic values to students.

Either intentionally or unintentionally, character education is taught in the daily

interactions of school staff and students. As soon as teachers and students meet and greet one another in the morning and throughout the entire school day, an example of appropriate behavior and civic minded-ness is set with each and every interaction. Therefore, as a vital facet of schooling, it should be ingrained in the core curriculum and the school culture on a continuous basis. Jack O'Connell, State Superintendent of Public Education and Kenneth Noonan, President of the California State Board of Education both advocate the incorporation of character education into standards-based instruction. Their belief is "that all students enrolled in the California Public Schools have the right to a comprehensive curriculum that promotes a common core of personal and social values as the basis of good character" (California Department of Education , 2006, p. 1) In addition, the California State Education Code in Section 233.5, supports the notion of character education instruction for students in public schools across the nation. As occurrences of in-school violence increases and stringent disciplinary techniques prove ineffective, many schools are implementing and utilizing character education programs. These programs are implemented with the intention of producing pro social behavior which will decrease negative student behavior, occurrences of violence and other problem behaviors.

Many of the characteristics cited earlier by theorists and practitioners which lead to safe, orderly and well managed schools, can be found in packaged character education programs. Furthermore, as a result of the current trend toward the explicit teaching of character education and the rise of positive forms of discipline, the PeaceBuilders program was developed in 1992. It is one of the "marketed and packaged" programs utilized by school sites as a means to positively manage student behavior. PeaceBuilders is a research-based and validated program created by a team of psychologists and education professionals. Fundamentally, PeaceBuilders "promotes a style of positive classroom management, designed to achieve the highest possible pro social behavior on the part of young people" (Peace Pack, 2006, p. 3). PeaceBuilders utilizes the

practice of praising young people for kind, caring, and responsible behavior. This is based on the Seattle Social Development Study, a longitudinal study, which revealed that “when all school adults greeted students, using their names and showing personal interest in them, and gave out ‘caught being good’ notes, substance abuse and teen pregnancy were dramatically reduced ten years later” (Peace Pack, 2006, p. 5). The program is built on the foundation that utilizing praise to promote positive behavior, explicitly teaching universal principles, and nurturing self responsibility for behavior, will ultimately produce productive citizens in the school setting, and later contributing members of society. Winchester Elementary School is in year two of the implementation of the PeaceBuilders program. It was initially implemented at the beginning of the 2006 school year as a directive from the district. The impact of this character building problem is examined and presented in this case study.

Research Question

What is the impact of the Peace Builder program on student behavior at Winchester Elementary School?

ORGANIZATION OF CASE STUDY

This case study is divided into six sections. Section I focuses on the introduction and personal context for the study. Section I also presents a statement of the problem and research question.

Section II presents the purpose of the study and a review of the literature. This section concludes with a definition of terms as well as the assumptions and beliefs related to the case study.

Section III consists of the study design. The setting and background for the study is describe herein. The method of data collection is also presented in this section.

Section IV is an analysis of the data and findings. It will include insights from data retrieval, survey responses and respondent interviews.

Section V includes a discussion of the results. Implications and recommendations are discussed in this section.

Finally, Section VI offers a conclusion and summary.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of the PeaceBuilders program on student behavior at Winchester Elementary School.

Review of the Literature

It goes without argument that effective school sites are capable because they employ certain techniques which manage student behavior with minimal disruption to classroom instruction, teaches moral values and builds the self-esteem of the student. Order and safety have been referred to and cited by Cotton in many different terms including “school climate;” “productive climate and culture;” “safe and orderly atmosphere conducive to learning;” and “learning environment.” Theorists as well as practitioners strive to locate the most effective means to manage student behavior. Furthermore, the federal government noted that by 2000, every school “will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning” (Goals 2000: Educate America Act, National Education Goals Panel, 1994, p. 13). At every level, this area of public schooling is reviewed. There exists an abundance of literature centered around the theme of student behavior management, discipline and its relation to character development. Some practitioners believe that discipline problems decrease with the implementation and utilization of character education programs. Much of the research attempts to answer the questions: “What school characteristics are associated with discipline problems?” “How can schools decrease disruptive behavior and increase positive behavior?” and finally, “How should a school wide discipline plan be developed and implemented?”

Marzano (2007), describes a safe and orderly environment as a school-level factor, as opposed to a student-level factor because it impacts the entire school population. He discusses five action steps which may lead to a safe and orderly environment:

Action Step 1: Establish rules and procedures for behavioral problems that might be caused by the school’s physical characteristics or school’s routines.

Action Step 2: Establish clear school wide rules and procedures for general behavior.

Action Step 3: Establish and enforce appropriate consequences for violations of rules and procedures.

Action Step 4: Establish a program that teaches self-discipline and responsibility to students.

Action Step 5: Establish a system that allows for the early detection of students who have high potential for violence and extreme behaviors. (p.55)

Other researchers have defined student behavior management in a different way. Dr. Fred Jones (2006), an advocate of positive discipline techniques, discusses student discipline in two ways:

1. Classroom discipline management. The management of discipline problems within the classroom where the teacher can structure the learning environment more or less unaided.
2. School-site discipline management. The management of discipline problems outside the classroom where the teacher is highly dependent on the collaboration and support of the colleagues for success. (Positive Classroom Discipline, 2006, p. 1)

With regards to implementing effective behavior management techniques, Dr. Jones believes that school faculty must accept one single and simple principle: *Every student belongs to every teacher all the time*. “The ownership of the values, rules and procedures of school-site discipline management will be much greater if the people responsible for implementing them are enfranchised in the process of development” (Positive School Discipline, 2006, p. 4). Dr. Jones’ theory of behavior management, at the school wide level, focuses on a collaborative effort by all staff members to achieve a successful and safe learning environment.

A safe environment, with minimal disruptions where students are able to learn, has long been and remains to be a major goal of practitioners across all academic levels. Further researchers support this idea. Joan Gaustad contends, “school discipline has two main goals: (1) ensure the safety of staff and students, and (2) create an environment conducive to learning” (School Discipline, 1992, p.1). Schools that are safe and orderly, maintain a delicate balance of

clearly established rules with a school climate of concern for the students. “Effective school discipline strategies seek to encourage responsible behavior and to provide all students with a satisfying school experience as well as to discourage misconduct” (Ibid., p.1). Gaustad alludes to the need for a balanced approach in implementing and utilizing discipline practices. An effective school discipline program will prevent and discourage negative behavior, promote and reward positive behavior, thus creating a harmonious learning environment for students and staff. Additional review of the literature indicates more support for the notion that effective school wide discipline practices serve to establish a positive school environment for all students and school personnel. Measures that are proactive and preclude negative student behavior are essential to maintaining an effective learning environment. Horner (2006), supports the aforementioned authors who theorize that there are fundamental aspects of successful schools in managing student behavior.

Schools with effective disciplinary systems observe several key practices. They invest in prevention of disruptive behavior; establish systems for identifying and responding to at-risk youth early; build the capacity for highly intensive interventions with the small number of students with chronic problem behaviors; and collect and use information about student behavior to guide ongoing improvement. (p. 2)

Horner highlights the fact that collected information about student behavior should be utilized to proactively manage behavior. It is necessary for schools to create a culture of competence.

Schools needs to prescribe, instruct and support behaviors that are expected of its students. He asserts,

rather than waiting for students to fail and then use punishment procedures to control disruptive behavior, effective schools define a small number of clear behavioral expectations (i.e., be safe, be respectful, be responsible); teach these expectations; and provide ongoing social recognition to students who display these behavioral expectations. (Horner, 2006, p. 1)

As much of the literature indicates, effective behavior management should be proactive and utilize incentives and rewards for the exhibition of positive behaviors, rather than reactive measures, such as the punishment of negative behavior. This has proven to be an ineffective form of student behavior management. Horner (2006) concurs,

unfortunately a strong and consistent policy of punishment and exclusion for problem behaviors without a balanced system of teaching and rewarding expected behaviors actually is associated with increases in aggression, vandalism, truancy and dropouts. Making schools less pleasant places for disruptive students has not proven to be an effective approach for reducing dangerous and disruptive acts (p. 3).

To establish pro-active school wide approaches, leaders must facilitate adoption and sustained use of the aforementioned research-validated practices. Eggleton (2006), discovered through his research that

a solid discipline plan requires cooperative ownership and responsibility of students, parents, and school personnel. Appropriate school discipline must be part of every program, curriculum, and practice. An effective discipline plan should inspire a climate in which all students take responsibility for their own behavior, treat others with kindness and learn the value of productive work and good citizenship (Eggleton, p. 10).

Eggleton supports the notion that student behavior management is most effective when all stakeholders are involved in the process of defining norms of conduct and establishing expectations for student behavior. He further asserts that effective discipline practice should be integrated throughout the school day and embedded in the daily curriculum and practices of the school site. Duke (1989), also advocates for the necessity of balance in creating a safe and orderly learning environment while managing student behavior. He affirms

what is known about the organization of orderly schools is that they are characterized by commitment to appropriate student behavior and clear behavior expectations for students. Rules, sanctions, and procedures are discussed, debated, and frequently formalized into school discipline and classroom management plans. To balance this emphasis on formal procedure, the climate in

these organizations convey concern for students as individuals. This concern manifests itself in a variety of ways, including efforts to involve students in school decision-making. (p. 47)

Duke underscores the importance of a school climate that communicates concern for its students. Including students in the formal process of creating the rules and expectations for student behavior provides the students with the feeling of ownership and authenticity.

Finally, when disciplinary action is warranted, Black and Downs (1992), raises a valid point in acknowledging that this action is, at times, a necessity in managing student behavior. They “urge administrators to regard disciplinary referrals as opportunities to teach... students valuable social skills that will promote success in future employment as well as in school” (p. 3). This is an important fact and leads educators and administrators down the path into character education programs which explicitly teach and promote pro social attitudes and behaviors.

The research on effective student behavior management, regardless of how it is termed, emphasizes certain characteristics. All assert that students need to be responsible for their own behavior and involved in the process of establishing norms and expectations for appropriate behavior. One way to effectively and proactively manage student behavior is to implement character education programs at public school institutions.

Character education, simply stated, is not a novel concept. Berkowitz and Bier (2006), cite Aristotle who noted more than 2000 years ago that “all adults involved with children either help or thwart children’s growth and development, whether we like it, intend it or not” (p. 1). Furthermore, “the inescapable fact is this: as adults involved intimately with children, educators cannot avoid ‘doing’ character education. Either intentionally or unintentionally, teachers shape the formation of character in students - simply by association - through positive or negative example” (Berkowitz and Bier, p. 1). There exists further historical evidence that supports the conjecture that character education is, and has been, an ever present entity in public education.

Berkowitz and Bier also cite Plato who, in *The Republic*, concedes this concept when he discusses character education and its relation to practical politics. Plato contends that the national existence of our country is successful or deemed a failure based upon the character of our citizens. “Bluntly stated, the role of the schools in the formation of civic character is a vital national interest” (Berkowitz and Bier, p. 1). Moreover, character education is not just necessary, it is good practical proclivity and politics. Cunningham (2005), asserts that “character education has been a goal of public education since the establishment of the public school system in this country. It was only in the 1950’s...that an emphasis on academics supplanted character education as an educational priority” (p. 5).

Student discipline and student behavior management is not only a foundation of the public school system in this country, it is also supported by legislation at the local, state and federal levels. All school districts are governed by an elected board of individuals whose purpose is to work in the interest of the student body. School boards across the nation employ policies that are concordant with state and federal laws. The safety of students is always a compelling consideration of the school and the courts place school safety in a high priority position when viewing any action by a school district. Courts have vested teachers with general control in the school setting, as schools and the governing districts have a legal obligation to ensure student safety and an harmonious learning environment. Furthermore, “student interests in attending public schools are protected by common law, federal and state constitutions, and by statutes enacted by Congress and state legislatures. These sources of the law define the legal relationships between schools and students” (Alexander and Alexander, 2006, p. 431). Several court cases have shown that the teacher-student relationship, with regards to discipline, is a complex one, subject to a variety of individual interpretation, yet is protected by common law.

The Fourteenth Amendment to the United States constitution outlines the basic rights of

students in public schools. Over the years, several court decisions have established a common law with regards to school discipline and student behavior.

The courts have recognized that in order for teachers to address the diversity of expectations placed upon them, they must be given sufficient latitude in the control of conduct of the school for an appropriate decorum and learning atmosphere to prevail. (Alexander and Alexander, p. 431)

Both superior and supreme Courts across the United States recognize *in loco parentis* as common law. *In loco parentis* translates into “in the place of the parent.” It endows the teacher with protecting the interests of the child in the public school environment. An early Missouri court defines the principle in the following manner,

the teacher of a school site as to the children of his school, while under his care, occupies, for the time being, the position of parent or guardian, and it is his right and duty not only to enforce discipline to preserve order and to teach, but also to look after the morals, the health and the safety of his pupils... (Alexander and Alexander, p. 432).

A Nebraska court further asserts,

General education and control of pupils who attend public schools are in the hands of school boards, superintendents, principals, and teachers. This control extends to health, proper surrounding, necessary discipline, promotion of morality and other wholesome influences, while parental authority is temporarily superseded (Alexander and Alexander, p. 433).

The common law of *in loco parentis* appears to have been upheld in the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Bethel School District No. 403 v. Fraser*. On April 26, 1983, Matthew N. Fraser, a student at Bethel High School in Bethel Washington delivered a campaign speech for a fellow student who was a candidate for office on the student government. In his campaign speech, Fraser referred to the candidate in terms which were lewd and sexually explicit. His speech deemed inappropriate for students. Fraser was subject to disciplinary measures, then brought legal action against the school district claiming his First Amendment rights had been violated.

The U.S. Supreme Court determined that, in the interest of the other 600 students, who are not obligated to listen to lewd and offensive language, *in loco parentis*, protects the student population from behavior that is not beneficial to them. Mr. Fraser's speech was inappropriate and the subsequent disciplinary actions were ruled befitting. This particular Supreme Court decision recognizes "the obvious concern on the part of parents, and school authorities acting *in loco parentis* to protect children--especially in a captive audience--from exposure to sexually explicit, indecent, or lewd speech. (Alexander and Alexander, p. 371)

Another U. S. Superior Court decision that supports *in loco parentis* as an active legal concept is New Jersey v. T.L.O., 469 U.S. 325. This case involved a 14-year-old freshman attending Piscataway High School in Middlesex County, New Jersey, who brought charges against the state claiming that her fourth amendment rights were violated in an unlawful search and seizure. The Assistant Principal discovered a group of girls in the school bathroom smoking cigarettes. Upon suspicion of other violations, the administrator searched T.L.O.'s backpack where he uncovered illegal drugs and paraphernalia. This case was reviewed by the Supreme Court who determined that the school was not liable because the school personnel acted *in loco parentis* when he searched the student's belongings. School officials, through the common law of *in loco parentis* protects personnel when it is proven the act is performed, in place of the parent, to protect the student. The Supreme Court held that the *in loco parentis* doctrine "retains vitality in appropriate circumstances" (Alexander and Alexander, p. 433). While all students' right are protected under the Fourteen Amendment, *in loco parentis* endows school officials with the responsibility of protecting the interest of children in any and all school environments. "Its justification is found in the necessity for an orderly and well-behaved student in keeping with an agreeable learning environment" (Alexander and Alexander, p. 433).

In the state of California, further legislation addressing student behavior management can

be found. Article 1, Section 28 of the California Constitution specifies that all students and staff of public schools possess the “inalienable right to attend campuses which are safe, secure and peaceful” (Kemerer, Sansom and Kemerer, p. 323). From the state level, legislation filters down to the local and district level. The concern about school safety and overall student behavior management is also addressed at the district level. The Hemet Unified School district has established policies which address student conduct. Board Policy 5131 states,

the Governing Board believes that all students have the right to be educated in a positive learning environment free from disruptions. On school grounds and at school activities, students shall be expected to exhibit appropriate conduct that does not infringe upon the rights of others or interfere with the school program. Behavior is considered appropriate when students are diligent in study, careful with school property, courteous, and respectful towards their teachers, other staff, students and volunteers. (HUSD Board Policy, 2007, p. 15)

School personnel are assigned the responsibility and obligation to promote the harmony of the school site by requiring rules and discipline. The principal of *in loco parentis*, as a proactive means to manage student behavior, lays the foundation for the implementation and utilization of character building programs such as PeaceBuilders. Character education programs, such as PeaceBuilders program, is a proactive means to promote pro social behavior and decrease antisocial student behavior and therefore discipline problems.

There exists many research studies that define character education and the most effective way to implement a character education program. Character education has also been referred to and defined in many different ways. The California Department of Education defines it as “resources to build and develop character in youth”. The department goes on to say that,

effective schools seek to develop and reinforce character traits, such as caring, citizenship, fairness, respect, responsibility, and trustworthiness, through a systematic approach that includes adult modeling, curriculum integration, a positive school climate, and access to comprehensive guidance and counseling services. (Elementary Makes the Grade, CDE, 1999)

Each year, the State Superintendent of Public Education and the President of the State Board of Education emphasize the importance of character education by declaring October as Character Education Month with a letter of announcement and legislative resolutions. The resolution defines character education as

an intentional, proactive, consistent, and comprehensive approach that promotes a common core of personal and social values in all phases of school life. A core that includes trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, citizenship, civic virtue, honesty, and personal responsibility. (CDE, 2007, p. 1)

Berkowitz and Bier (2007), compile the various definitions of character education, which include:

...a national movement creating schools that foster ethical, responsible, and caring young people by modeling and teaching good character through emphasis on universal values that we all share. It is the intentional, proactive effort by schools, districts, and states to instill in their students important core, ethical values such as caring, honesty, fairness, responsibility, and respect for self and others. (Character Education Partnership)

Character education is teaching children about basic human values, including honesty, kindness, generosity, courage, freedom, equality, and respect. The goal is to raise children to become morally responsible, self-discipline citizens. (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development)

Character education is any deliberate approach by which school personnel, often in conjunction with parents and community members, help children and youth become caring, principled, and responsible. (National Commission on Character Education)

Moreover, Likona (1991), has defined character education in the following manner:

the deliberate, proactive effort to develop good character in kids - or, more simply, to teach children right from wrong. It assumes that right and wrong do exist, that there are objective moral standards that transcend individual choice - standards like respect, responsibility, honesty, and fairness - and that we should teach these directly to young people. (Likona, p.2)

Recent findings from research studies indicate that effective character education assists in and

accentuates the academic goals of a school site. In essence, good character education promotes learning. The California State Board of Education expresses their understanding of what character education should encompass. California Education Code Section 233.5(a) states:

each teacher shall endeavor to impress upon the minds of the pupils the principles of morality, truth, justice, patriotism, and a true comprehension of the rights, duties, and dignity of American citizenship, and the meaning of equality and human dignity, including the promotion of harmonious relations, kindness toward domestic pets and the humane treatment of living creatures, to teach them to avoid idleness, profanity, and falsehood, and to instruct them in manners and morals and the principles of a free government. (California Department of Education, 2007, p. 1)

Battistich (2007), provides this definition of character education “the deliberate use of all dimensions of school life to foster optimal character development” (p. 5). He, like other researchers, agree that character education should be embedded into the daily operations of the school site, rather than it existing as a separate entity. He states,

this comprehensive approach...utilizes every aspect of schooling - the content of the curriculum, the process of instruction, the quality of relationships, the handling of discipline, the conduct of co-curricular activities and the ethos of the total school environment - to foster good character in all school members. (Battistich, 2007, p. 3)

While the term character education means quite different things to different people, there exists common practices of effective programs. Berkowitz and Bier (2007), identify several characteristics or practices of effective character education programs. Programs which teach social skills and mindfulness such as communication skills, active listening, relationship skills and social awareness have been successful. Additionally, programs which teach self-responsibility personal improvement such as goal setting, have been effective in teaching character education. Finally, programs which focus on problem solving and decision making as a personal character skill have also proven fruitful. Effective programs also display five pedagogical methods that successful programs incorporate (Berkowitz and Bier). These key factors are staff and

professional development before implementation, teaching strategies which are interactive, direct teaching strategies, community and family participation and modeling/mentoring opportunities. School site and classroom behavior management strategies that utilize positive forms of management such as incentives and rewards are also important to an effective character education program.

There are a number of commercially packaged programs which are designed to teach character education school wide through a systematic agenda. The PeaceBuilder program is a research based and validated program which utilizes these key components or practices.

PeaceBuilder is a research-based program. Research-based means that the program was designed by a team of individuals including educational professional and psychologists, who employed the substantial and proven findings from a variety of research studies. It is also a research-validated program which means that the research studies conducted on the program and its impact on the lives of children, has been significant. This is important because school administration and teachers are highly aware of the accountability of instructional time, therefore a program that has proven effective, through research, retains credibility.

The PeaceBuilder program employs all of the key indicators identified by the authors and researchers cited in this review. Fundamental to the program are the PeaceBuilders principles. Faithful practice of these principles is intended to produce pro social behavior. PeaceBuilders uses the practice of praising people for kind, caring, and responsible behavior. The Social Development Study, a research study in Seattle, displayed the following results "...when all school adults greeted students, using their names and showing personal interest in them, and gave out 'caught being good' notes, substance abuse and teen pregnancy were dramatically reduced ten years later" (Peace Pack, p. 4).

The PeaceBuilder program has also proven successful in altering the behavioral outcomes

for students identified as “at-risk”. In one of the most notorious studies on resiliency, Dr. Emmy Werner directed a 31-year study which examined “at-risk” students. The children in this study were exposed to many factors (poverty, abuse, mental illness and lack of education) that would place them at a higher risk for failure than children who are exposed to oppositional entities. Despite these enormous negative odds, these children matured into “resilient” individuals. These individuals “made it” or were successful in relationships, employment and education as a result of the presence of an individual who was nurturing and caring. While most of the participants in the study could site their parents as that significant and profound individual, many asserted that it was a teacher or other school personnel, who “made the difference”. One of the main components of the PeaceBuilders program is the third principle of the program which is to seek wise people. This principle is founded on the following premise:

It is important to give our young people the knowledge that there are wise people in their midst to whom they can turn for help and advice in solving their own problems, or the problems of someone else. To a child, finding a wise person can make the difference between success and failure, between mastery and self-doubt, between peace and violence. (Peace Pack, p. 30)

In essence, this component of the program teaches children to seek assistance from individuals who are wise, as well as, it is intended to produce, in return, wise people. “PeaceBuilders teaches young people to gain the skills and integrity to become the kind of adults who can provide this kind of care and dedication to other” (PeaceBuilders training, 2006, p. 26).

Implementation of the PeaceBuilders program, with fidelity, is as important, if not more important than the curriculum, educators’ guide and activities. Without a commitment of staff members to utilize the program, with fidelity, the program and its curriculum is relegated to the shelves, unused, collecting dust. The PeaceBuilders program is implemented initially with a one day professional training for the entire staff to establish norms and expectations for school wide and classroom utilization. The leadership team then coordinates activities such as assemblies and

special presentations, as well as, ensure that posters and signs are visible across the school campus. The PeaceBuilder pledge is recited daily and the language is used in daily interactions with students. Further implementation includes adults purposefully greeting students daily, and PraiseNotes are displayed on PraiseBoards. Additionally, classroom behavior management utilizes PeaceBuilder strategies and specific PeaceBuilder lessons are taught.

At Winchester, the PeaceBuilder pledge is recited weekly at Friday flag, an all school morning assembly. A scheduled weekly visit by the administration to each classroom to award students for the PraiseNotes they have earned throughout the week, is also a key component of our implementation process. Each teacher implements the program in their own classroom according to their time and availability of materials. The PeaceBuilders program has proven effective for other schools because in all settings, the “program creates a peaceful environment by increasing positive, respectful, thoughtful behavior, while decreasing violence and disruptive behavior” (PeacePartners, Inc., p. 1). Teacher input and statistical data will determine the effectiveness of the PeaceBuilder program and its impact on student behavior at Winchester Elementary School.

In conclusion, the review of the literature reveals several key points. First, a safe and orderly learning environment is essential to an effective school site. Secondly, student safety is required by local, state and federal statutes. Third, the education of students in moral values occurs either intentionally or unintentionally. Finally, many school sites attempt to intentionally educate and develop a climate of safety and learning by implementing character education programs.

Definition of Terms

CNS - Counseling

COM SVC - Community Service

DET - Detention

ISS - In School Suspension

LUN - Lunch Detention

NON - None

OCR - On Campus Retention

PM 30 - Detention PM - 30 minutes

SASI System - School Administrative Student Information System

SUS - Suspension

WRN - Warning

Assumptions and Beliefs

I believe that:

1. Behavior problems in public schools are becoming more complex and demand more time.
2. Targeted character education programs lead to better student behavior.
3. Character education needs to be explicitly taught in order for it to impact student behavior and should supplant curriculum as opposed to supplement the curriculum.

It is assumed that:

1. There are several external factors which contribute to character education and student behavior problems.
2. There are several ways to motivate students towards positive behavior.

PeaceBuilders is one of those ways.

3. Students who participate in the PeaceBuilder program are in classrooms where the program will have a positive effect on student behavior.
4. All staff members logged punitive discipline measures with administration through the SASI system.
5. Those who were questioned did not withhold information and answered each question truthfully.

Research Question

What is the impact of the PeaceBuilders program on student behavior at Winchester Elementary School?

STUDY DESIGN

Setting

Winchester California is the 2nd oldest community in what is known as the San Jacinto Valley. Settlers arrived to the Pleasant Valley in 1879, and in 1886 the town site was plotted. Winchester Elementary School, still located at its original site, was first opened in the early 1890's. It is located nine miles southwest of Hemet California with a population of 2,155. It is one of 25 schools in the Hemet Unified School District. Its attendance boundaries cover a large geographic area as many students live in a rural atmosphere on acreage. Most of the students are bused to the school site. Winchester services a large group of socio economically disadvantaged students. Eighty (80%) of our student population receives free and/or reduced lunch. Only a very small percentage of the parents/guardians of the students attended school past high school. Many of the students are identified as "at-risk", which means that due to certain characteristics, these students are at a higher risk for failure than children who do not grow up with adverse situations. Historically, school wide and classroom behavior management was achieved through

positive reinforcement of appropriate behavior as well as punishment for negative behavior. However, discipline practices were ambiguous and lacked continuity. Problems arose in the definition of negative behaviors and the appropriate means to deal with this behavior. The most effective way to reward positive student behaviors was also becoming an issue due to inconsistency.

While in the classroom, most teachers utilized some independent form of positive reinforcement and/or punishment. Some staff members awarded students with “Paw Prints”, a paper certificate bearing the print of the school mascot, the Wildcat, to students exhibiting positive behavior anywhere on campus and at any time during the school day. Students earned “Paw Prints” for everything from picking up trash, to helping in the cafeteria, to showing politeness, to receiving 100% on a spelling test. At the monthly assembly the principal chose one or two “Paw Prints” and awarded the recipient a treat or privilege. While this form of behavior modification seemed to motivate students, some teachers felt the range of behaviors awarded was not only too broad, but it also produced a lack of authenticity when rewarded behaviors are compared. Students who displayed chronic or major behavior problems were immediately sent to the Principal’s office with a referral. A referral (Appendix C.) was a 1/2 sheet triplicate form that outlined the infraction and the steps taken by the administrator to correct or simply punish the behavior. No program existed to deter chronic behavior problems. At the commencement of the 2005 school year, Winchester school saw an increase in student population by nearly 200 students. With this increase in population the administration believed this it to be a pivotal school year in determining the culture and climate that will drive Winchester Elementary into the future.

Method

This descriptive case study reviewed extensive research on the impact of character

education on student behavior. More specifically, the case study focused on the implementation and utilization of the PeaceBuilders program as a means to provide school wide positive behavior management techniques, to improve student discipline and to set a safe and orderly culture and climate at Winchester Elementary School. The PeaceBuilder program is one of many commercially packaged programs that supports the teaching of character education. The purpose of the case study is to determine the impact of the PeaceBuilders program on student behavior at Winchester.

After reviewing the literature on character education, the case study focused on the specific views of the true practitioners of the program, certificated and classified staff members at Winchester School. The study was to ascertain their views and attitude towards the effectiveness of the PeaceBuilders program. A survey (Appendix A) was employed to adjudicate the opinions, convictions and practices of both the certificated and classified staff members. Each respondent was given the opportunity to express further comments in a free response section. The survey asked respondents to rate the PeaceBuilder program in the following six (6) areas:

1. The effectiveness of the PeaceBuilder program in reducing negative student behavior in the classroom.
2. The effectiveness of the PeaceBuilder program in reducing negative student behavior on the playground and in the lunchroom.
3. Time spent implementing the PeaceBuilder program
4. The impact of the PeaceBuilder program in producing pro social behavior.
5. Utilization of components of the PeaceBuilder program to achieve the desired end.
6. Overall effectiveness of the PeaceBuilder program.

Respondents also indicated the number of PraiseNotes distributed which rewards positive

behavior compared to the number of referrals to the principal's office given for negative behavior. Further data was analyzed from the SASI (School Administrators Student Information) system. Records of punitive action, such as student referrals and suspensions, were compared from the 2005 school year, prior to the implementation of the PeaceBuilder program, to the 2006-07 school year, which is after initial implementation of the program school wide. This data is designed to compare the number and types of student offenses recorded in the SASI system prior to the PeaceBuilder program, to the number and types of offenses after the program.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

At the time of data collection, teachers in Grades K-5 completed a 10-item survey.

Teachers were also given the opportunity to add further comments in the free response section of the survey. Teacher sample sizes are reported in Table 1. 31 of the 41 (76%) certificated staff members responded to the survey. Classified staff members were also asked to complete a 9-item survey. 13 of the 17 (76%) classified staff members completed the survey. Classified staff sample sizes are reported in Table 2.

Table 1.
Certificated Staff at Winchester School

Classification	Respondents	Non respondents	Total at Classification
Administration	2	0	2
K	3	2	5
1	3	3	6
2	4	2	6
3	6	0	6
4	3	0	3
5	3	0	3
SDC	1	2	3
RSP	1	1	2
RFC	1	0	1
MUSIC	1	0	1
PE	2	0	2
4/5 Combo	1	0	1
Totals	31	10	41

Table 2.
Classified Staff at Winchester School

Classification	Respondents	Non-respondents	Total at Classification
Office Staff	2	0	2
Health Technician	1	0	1
Custodial	1	1	2
Computer Class	1	0	1
Library	1	0	1
Cafeteria	2	1	3
Instructional Assistants	2	0	2
Supervision Assistants	3	2	5
Totals	13	4	17

CERTIFICATED STAFF SURVEY RESPONSES

Time in Minutes Devoted to Implementation of Program Components

There are a number of factors which contribute to the effectiveness of any curriculum or program utilized in public school systems. Faithful implementation is one such factor. Faithful implementation of the PeaceBuilders program includes the following: leadership team coordinating activities such as assemblies and special presentations, posters and signs are visible in classrooms and around campus, PraiseNotes are displayed on PraiseBoards both in each classrooms as well as school wide, PeaceBuilder pledge is recited daily and the language is used, adults greet students daily, classroom behavior management utilizes PeaceBuilder strategies and lessons are taught. In the initial stages, the administration provided a one day training for the entire staff and established norms and expectations for classroom and school wide

implementation and utilization.

The number of instructional minutes devoted to implementing program components is a key concern when, due to state and federal statutes, most of the instructional day is relegated to core subjects such as Language Arts, Math and English Language Development. At Winchester 29 of the 35 teachers or 83% responded to the survey. The survey indicated that 14 of 29 teachers (48.3%) implemented the PeaceBuilders program for 5 to 15 minutes per day. An additional 11 teachers (37.9%) reported they implemented the program 15 to 30 minutes per day. 13.8% of teachers stated they utilized the program between 30 and 45 minutes daily. None of the respondents indicated employing the program for an hour or more per day. In the free response section of the survey, respondents indicated that the program was easy to use yet a major frustration preventing more time spent in implementation of the program components is the particular time constraints of each individual teacher.

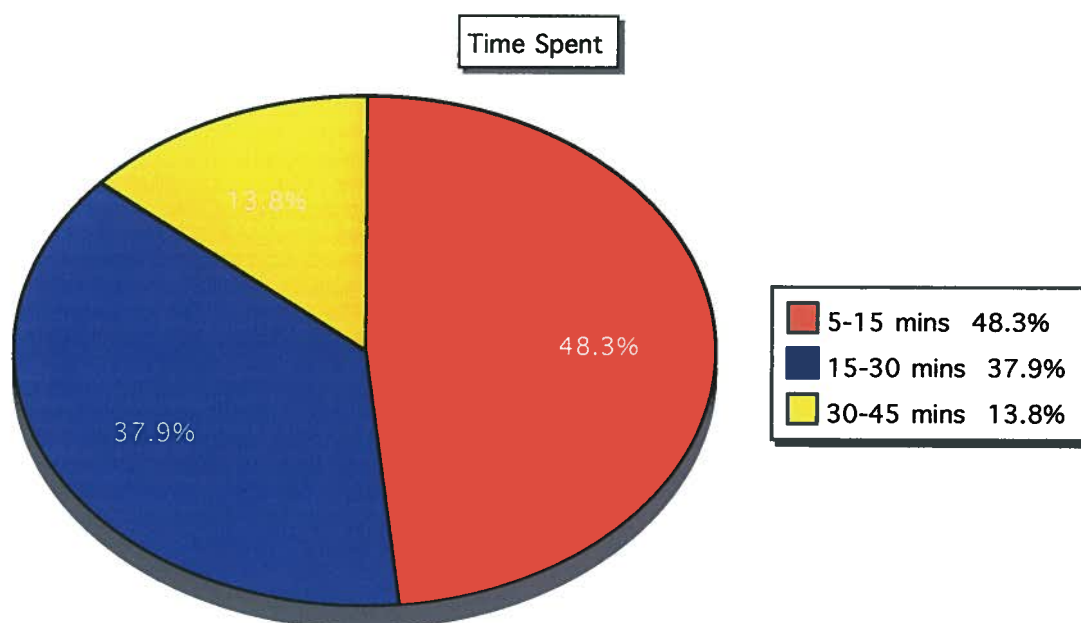


Figure 1.

Faithful implementation of the program also includes ease in integrating the various components into a standards-based curriculum and the number of program components utilized. The fifth survey item asked respondents to indicate the total number of core PeaceBuilder components utilized in their classroom. These include PraiseNotes, PeaceBuilder pledge recited, PeaceBuilder principles posted in classroom, reproducible binders (independent lessons on PeaceBuilder rules), special presentations, PraiseBoard, Home/School connection reproducible.

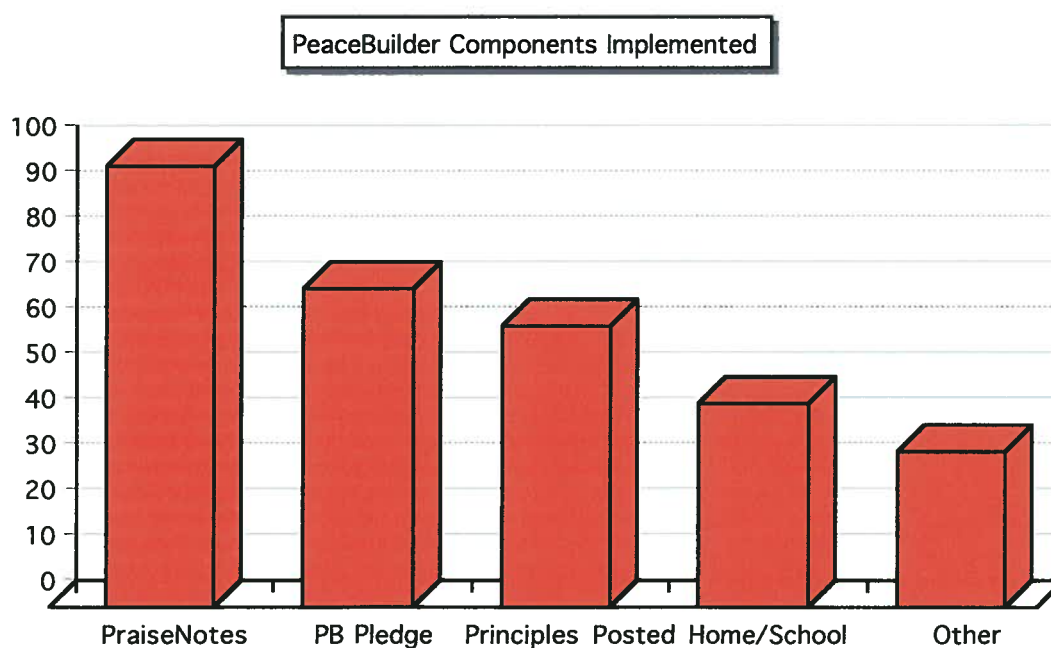


Figure 2.

Since PraiseNotes are the easiest component to implement because its utilization promotes positive behavior, 28 of the 29 (97%) of teachers utilizes Praise Notes. In the free response section of the survey, teachers indicated an immediate change in student behavior, when using PraiseNotes, for students who are motivated extrinsically. 20 of the 29 teachers (70%) stated that they recite the PeaceBuilders pledge daily. An additional (62%), 18 of 29 certificated staff members reported that they have the PeaceBuilders principles posted in their classrooms.

(45%) or 13 of 29 teachers employ the home/school connection by sending PraiseNotes home for celebration by family members and an introductory newsletter provided in the PeacePack.

Finally, 10 of the 29 respondents, (34%) indicated that they utilize other lessons, activities and reproducible provided in the PeacePack.

Effectiveness in the Classroom

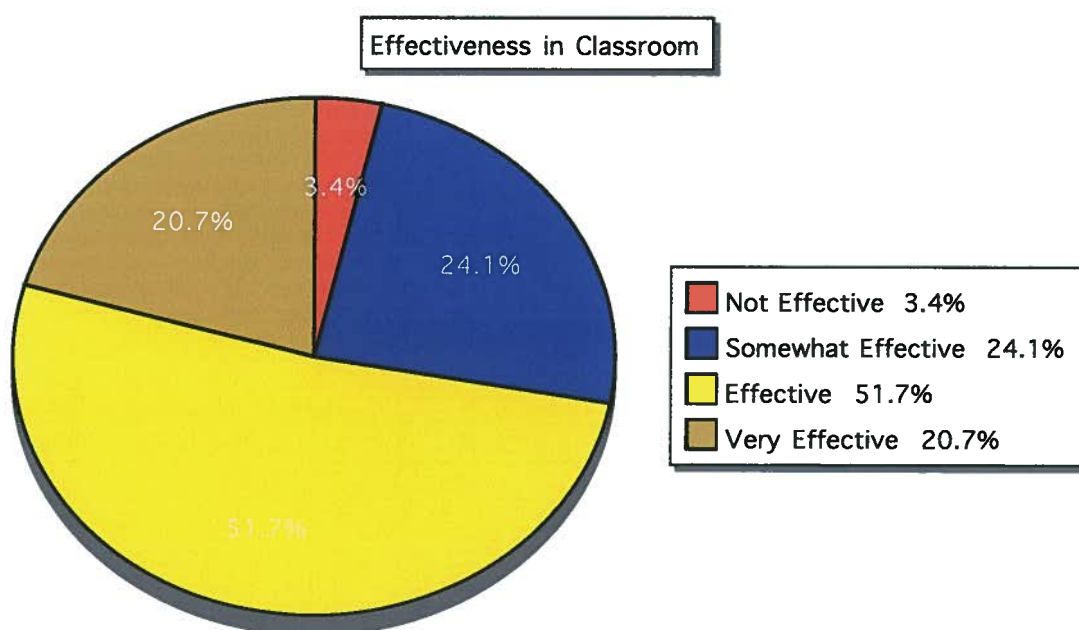


Figure 3.

Teachers were asked to rate the PeaceBuilders program on its effectiveness in reducing negative student behavior in the classroom. Some undesirable behaviors, as indicated by teachers who responded to the survey, were, talking out, out of seat, negative comments to classmates, incomplete assignments, staying on task. On a scale from 1 to 4 with the following indicators: 1 being “not at all” 2 being “somewhat effective” 3 is “effective” and 4 being “very much/ very effective” respondents indicated how effective the program is in reducing the negative student behaviors listed above. 7 of the 29 teachers surveyed (24.1%) believed that the program was

somewhat effective in reducing negative behavior in the classroom. 15 respondents (51.7%) reported that the PeaceBuilders program is effective in reducing those negative behaviors which disrupts instructional time. Only 6 of the 29 (20.7%) teachers surveyed reported that the program affects negative student behavior to a great extent. One (1) or (3.4%) survey participant indicated that the PeaceBuilders program was not at all effective.

Effectiveness Outside the Classroom / In Other Areas of the Campus

Certificated staff members utilize PraiseNotes on the playground and outside of the classroom during before school duty, recess duty and after school duty. Before school duty is 25 minutes long. While students are arriving to campus, many behaviors problems could occur. While students are entering and exiting the buses, adult supervision is important. Several school in the Hemet Unified School district employ a policy called “ First 15, Last 15”. During the first 15 minutes of school, during student arrival and the last 15 minutes of school during student dismissal, school personnel will be on alert to prevent uninvited guests on campus and a safe exit of students. Recess duty occurs 2 to 3 times daily for certificated staff members. At this time, teachers are responsible to control student behavior on the playground and in the bathrooms. After school duty entails ensuring students are escorted to 1 of 4 possible destinations: bus line, after school program, picked up by car, or walking. During these intense times of student safety, the certificated staff relies on Praise Notes to ensure a safe and orderly environment and student discipline is managed by the distribution of Praise Notes to students.

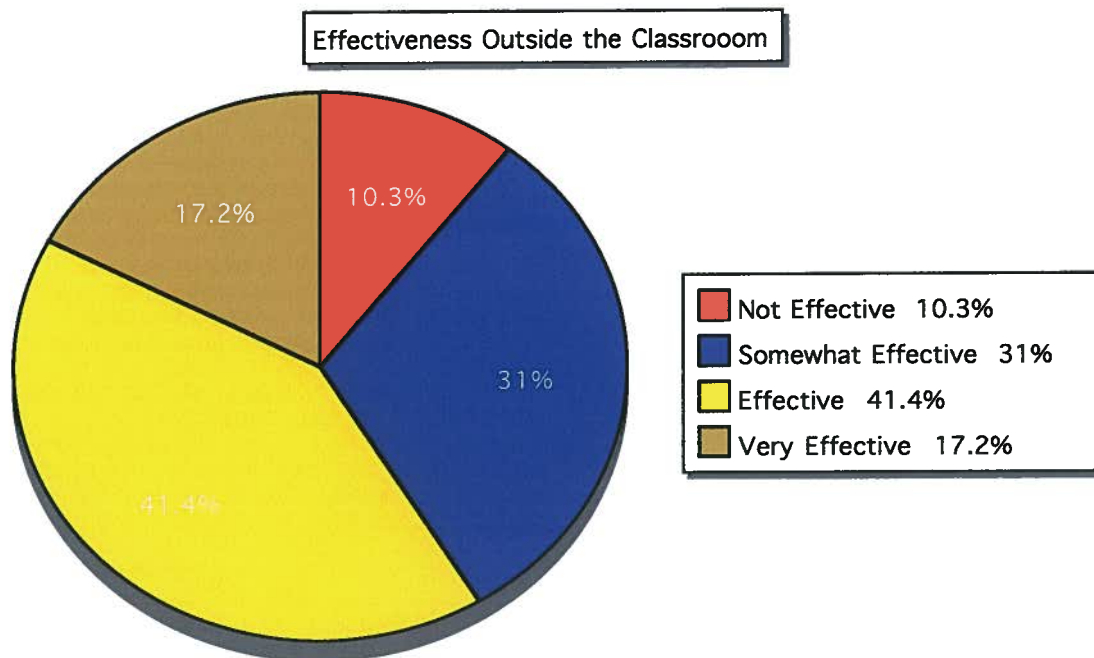


Figure 4.

On a scale from 1 to 4 with the following indicators: 1 being “not at all” 2 being “somewhat effective” 3 is “effective” and 4 being “very much/very effective” respondents rated the effectiveness of the PeaceBuilders program while managing student behavior on other parts of the school campus. 3 of 29 teachers (10.3%), indicated that the PeaceBuilder program has no effective on reducing negative behavior in areas outside of the classroom. 9 of 29 teachers or 31% expressed that the program is somewhat effect. 41.4% (12 of 29) reported that the program is effective, while 17.2% or five certificated staff members stated that the program is very effective in managing student behavior outside of the classroom.

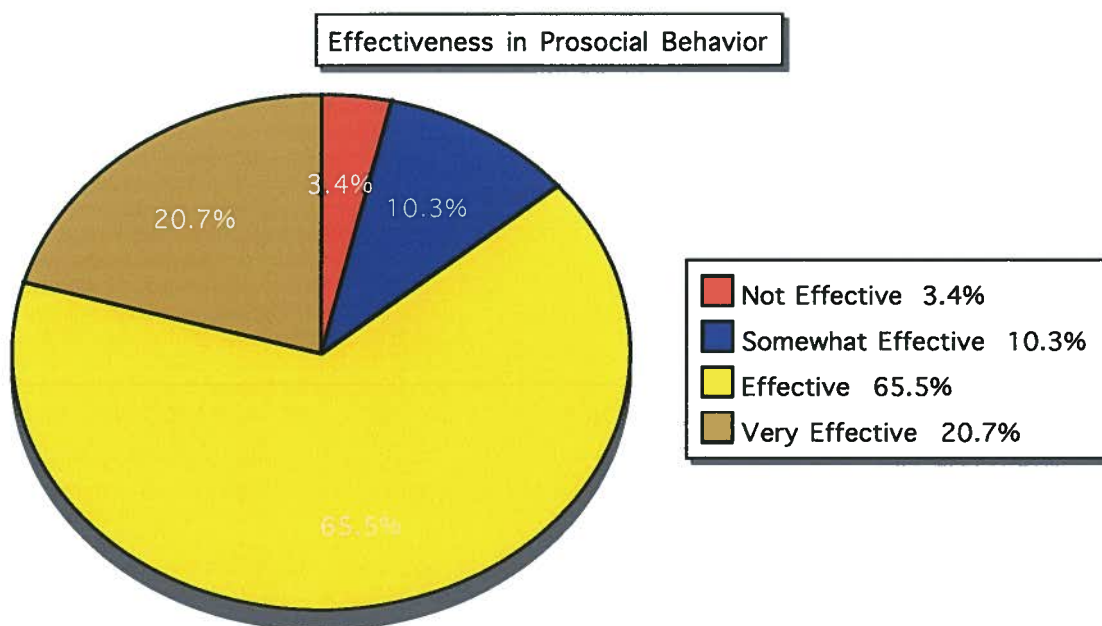
Effectiveness in Producing Pro Social Behavior

Pro social behavior, the antithetical term of anti social behavior, alludes to the actions performed voluntarily which support, and is advantageous to other individuals and groups of individuals. These behaviors include respectfulness, kindness, responsibility for self and others.

Under the consideration that the public school system is one of the most prominent means of socialization and the development of moral and civic values in children and young adults, the teaching of attitudes and behaviors which support moral understanding and the operation of society, is paramount to the continuation of a productive society.

The PeaceBuilder program highlights the following pro social behaviors: to praise others, give up put-downs, seek wise people, notice and correct wrongs caused and to help others. Similar to the other survey items, respondents rated the PeaceBuilders program's impact in producing pro social behavior on a scale of 1 to 4. 3.4% of the teachers surveyed indicated that the program was not at all effective in producing pro social behavior. 10.3% (3 of 29) reported that the program was somewhat effective while 65.5% and 20.7% indicated that the program is effective and very effective, respectively, in producing pro social behavior.

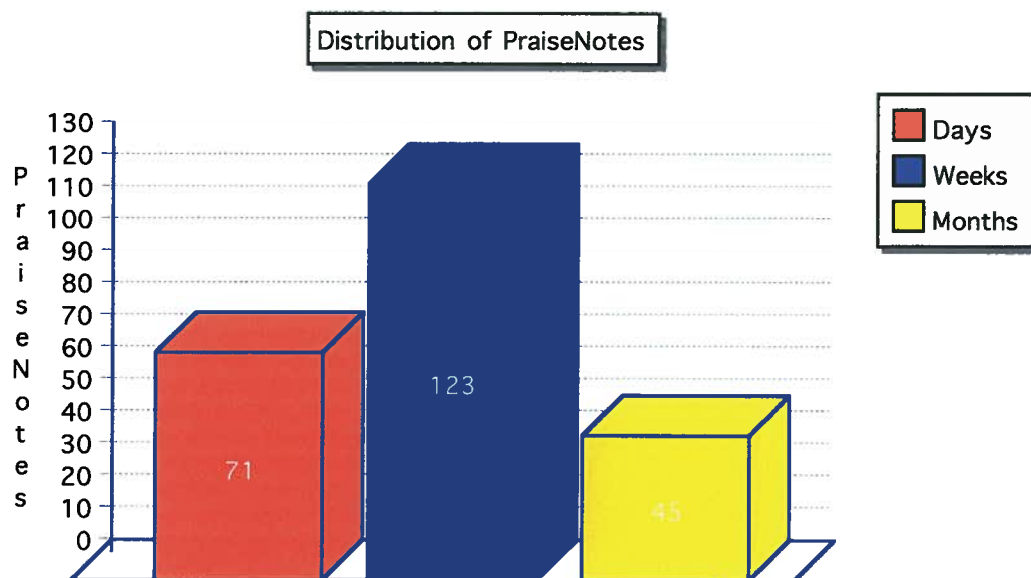
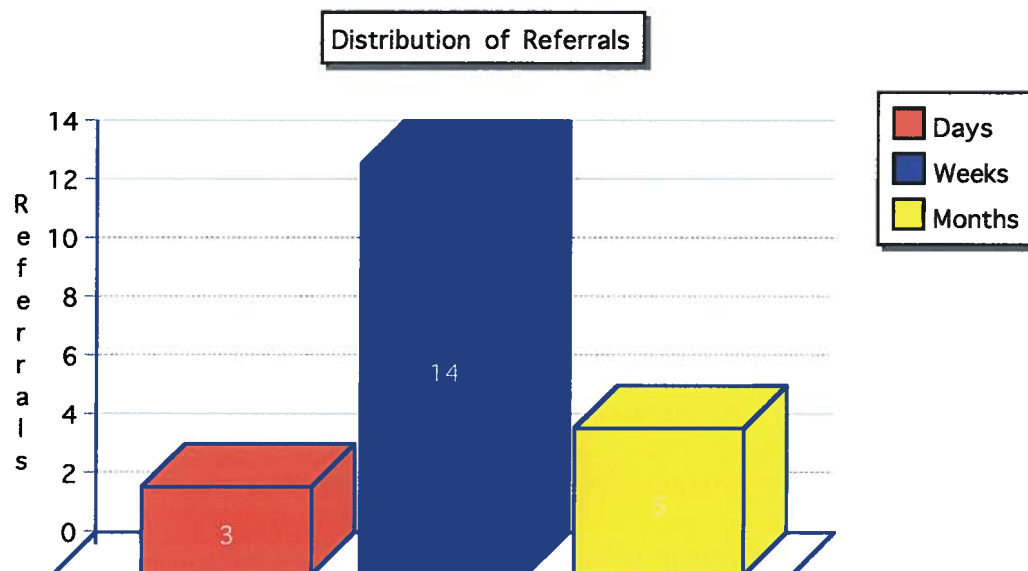
Figure 5.



In the free response section, a third grade teacher stated that pro social behavior is wide

spread among the students at her grade level. She feels that the PeaceBuilder program reinforces the positive behaviors that many students exhibit. Her sentiment is that the PeaceBuilder program provides a common language and system for managing student behavior, both in the classroom and on the playground as well.

The final item of the survey asks respondents to indicate the number of referrals distributed to students who do not support the PeaceBuilder principles and/or perform a major infraction requiring intervention and/or action from the administration. A referral (Appendix C.) is a 1/2 page document printed in triplicate which outlines the infraction and the actions taken by administration. Teacher action includes 1 of 4 options from teacher-student conference to parent contract and referral to administration. Administrator actions include parent contact, special assignment, behavior support plan, mentor assigned, ISS, suspension and other means of discipline designed to support positive student behavior. Figure 6. displays the results of the certificated staff's distribution of PraiseNotes vs. referrals in days, weeks and months. Per week, 123 PraiseNotes are distributed, compared to a minimal number, 14, of referrals utilized to manage student behavior. In one day, three (3) referrals are utilized as opposed to seventy-one (71) PraiseNotes. In one month, 45 PraiseNotes are used to manage student behavior while five (5) referrals are employed.

**Figure. 6**

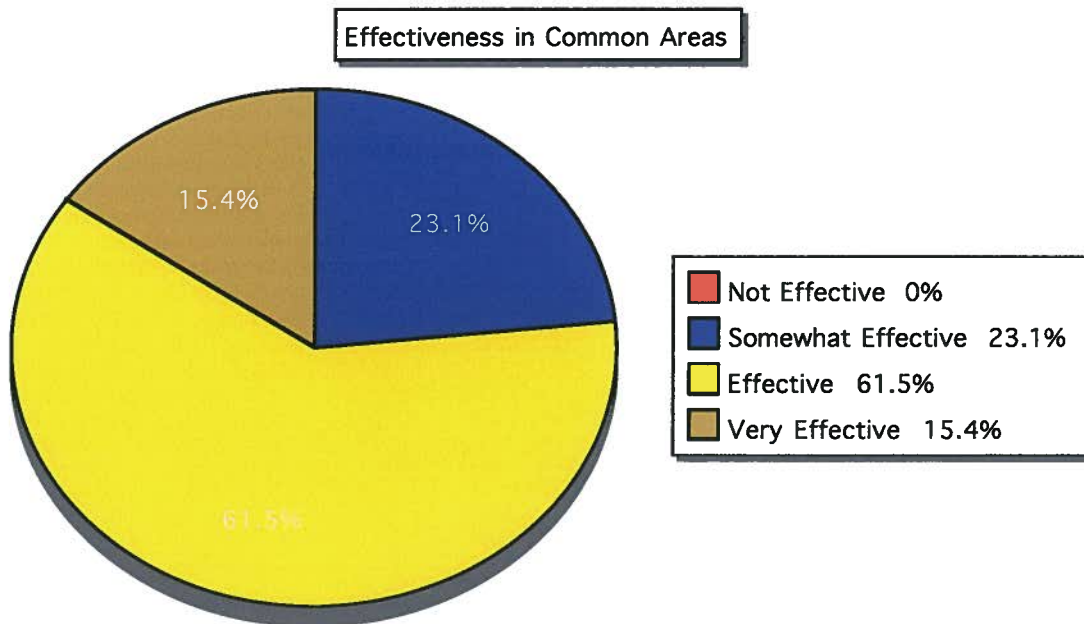


Figure 7.

Effectiveness on the Playground and Cafeteria

During breakfast and lunch, classified staff members supervise 670 students daily. Breakfast is served from 8:15 - 8:40 am. Lunch supervision occurs from 11:15 am to 1:00 pm. Throughout the school day, classified staff members manage students from all grade levels - kindergarten to fifth grade. Without a school wide form of student behavior management and motivation, this is an arduous and complex task. Classified staff members were asked to rate the program in reducing negative behaviors during these times. Negative behaviors were described as aggression towards others, arguments with other students, throwing food and disrespectfulness. 23.1% or 3 of the respondents indicated that the program is very effective in reducing negative behavior during these times, while 69.2% or 9 classified staff members indicated that the program is effective. Only 1 person (7.7%) indicated that the program is somewhat effective. No one reported that the program was ineffective.

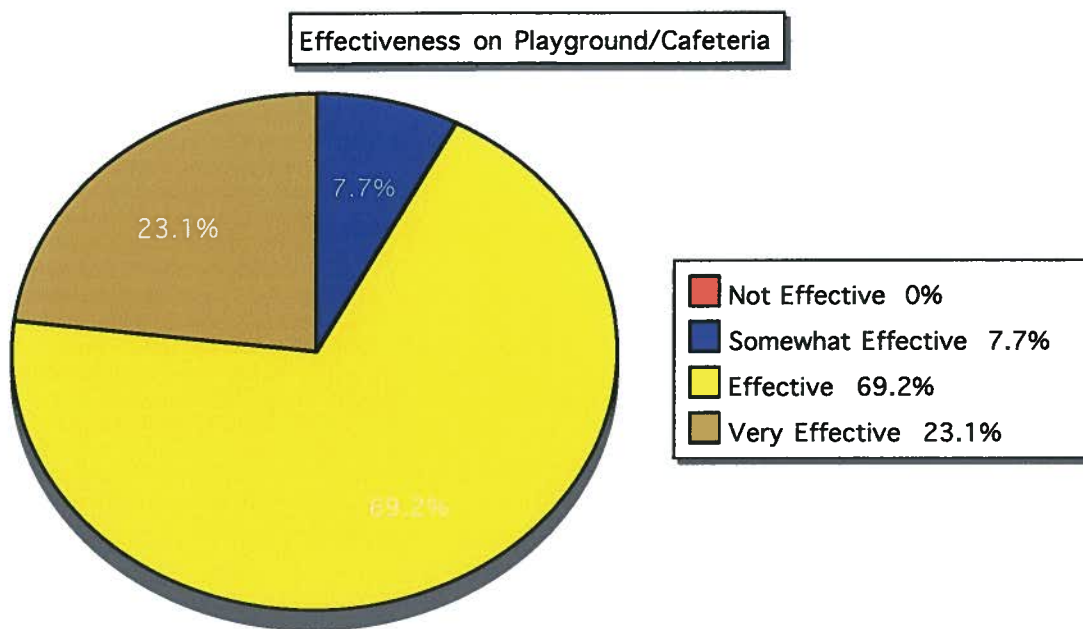
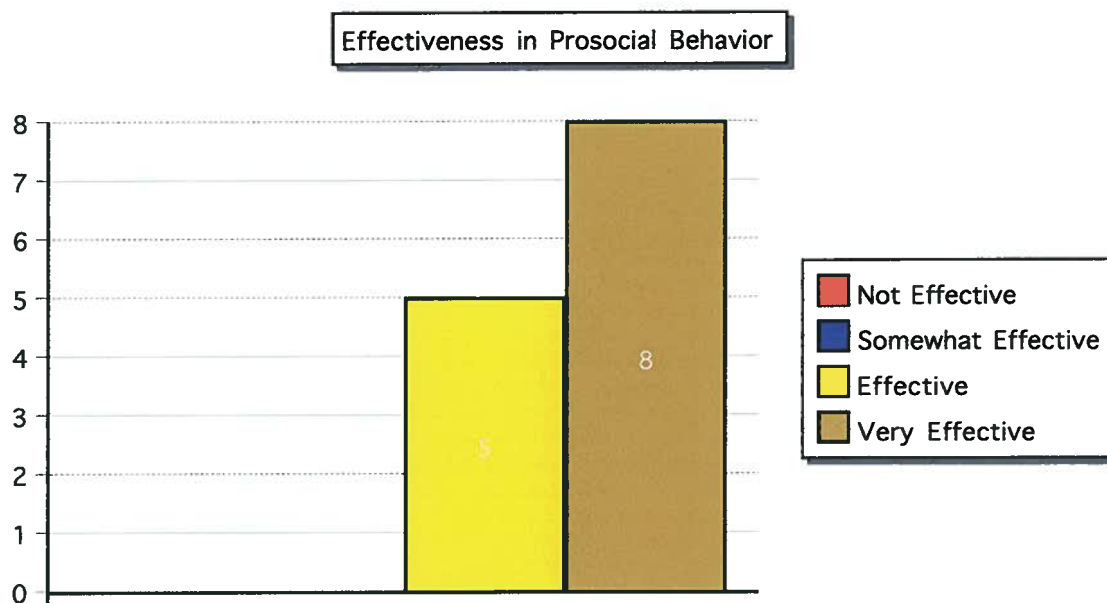


Figure 8.

Effectiveness in Producing Pro social Behavior

Pro social behaviors were described by classified staff members as helping others, showing responsibility, being respectful and showing resourcefulness. As Figure 9. indicates, 5 of the 13 respondents indicated that the PeaceBuilder program is effective in producing pro social behavior. An additional 8 classified staff members demonstrate through ratings that the program is very effective in producing behavior that is conducive to the social order of the school site.

Figure 9.

In the free response section of the survey lunch supervisors state that the distribution of PraiseNotes is an excellent way to motivate students towards pro social behavior. Sandie Vail, Health Technician, raves that she “loves the program. It really helps the kids work to be good”. Furthermore, lunch supervisors Mrs. E. Morentin states, “ as soon as I pull out the PraiseNotes, the kids start acting right”. Mrs. M. Pena recognizes that “the PraiseNotes are really motivating the students”.

DATA FROM THE SASI SYSTEM

As relevant to this case study, further data was gathered from the SASI (School Administrative Student Information) system. The SASI system is a nationwide computer program developed by Pearson School Systems. It is designed to electronically manage student attendance, discipline, grades and other data. Each day, data is input into the computer by school personnel. This data is immediately and easily available for analyzation by school

administration. At Winchester school, the SASI system became operational and was utilized during the latter half of the 2005-06 school year. Prior to this term, student data was collected on paper and filed manually.

The SASI system groups student discipline offenses into 18 different categories, each recognized according to the severity of the offense. At Winchester School, the SASI system identified nine of the 18 different descriptors that SASI and therefore the Hemet Unified School District deems as necessary for disciplinary action. These nine areas are: counseling, detention, community service, in school suspension, lunch detention, on campus retention, suspension, warning, PM detention and none. Data from these categories were analyzed from the 2005-06 school year, which indicates disciplinary action prior to the implementation of year one of the PeaceBuilders program, to the 2006-07 school year where disciplinary action was taken after implementation of the program. Table 3. displays the data gathered from the SASI system. The data from this system indicates different results from the teacher surveys. In the 2005 school year, discipline infractions which resulted in counseling (CNS) totaled 46 infractions. In the 2006-07 school year, this number had more than doubled to 95 incidents. The data also indicates a rise in infractions resulting in detention (DET), in-school suspensions (ISS), lunch detention (LUN), suspensions (SUS) and warnings (WRN). Student behavior problems which resulted in community service (COM SVC) and on campus retention (OCR) decreased from the 2005 school year to the 2006-07 school year. Behaviors which resulted in no action taken (NON) occurred twice in 2006-07 while no incidents were reported to have occurred in the 2005 school year. One incident requiring an afternoon detention for thirty minutes occurred in 2006-07, however nothing was recorded for the 2005 school year.

54 warnings were employed.

During the process of data collection, student population was also ascertained and analyzed as the number of students enrolled at the school site is a significant factor. Table 4. reports the findings.

Table 4.
Student Population at Winchester School

School Year	Student Enrollment
2005	552
2006	651
2007	675
Totals	1,878

Prior to the implementation of the PeaceBuilders program 552 students were in enrolled. The following year, the first year of implementation of the program, student enrollment increased by nearly 100 students to 651. Currently, student population is at 675, and reportedly, continues to enlarge.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Implications

This case study reviewed the impact of the PeaceBuilders program on character education for students at Winchester Elementary School. Several conclusions were derived from an extensive review of the literature, personal points of view from current practitioners at the school site and data analysis from the SASI system.

The data collected from the certificated and classified staff members point to a different determination than the data retrieved from the SASI system. There are several factors which may contribute to these findings. It goes without argument that the development of student character is influenced by many various constructs. There exists an abundance of factors that play a role in developing the character of an individual. One must consider both internal and external factors; positive and negative factors. Genetic design as well as exposure to certain environmental elements pre-exposes one to certain circumstances. It is in the totality of these factors where subjectivity and options occur. At the onset of this case study, I understood the complexity of these factors and its impact on student behavior from the pupils' point of view, as well as student discipline from the school personnel's' perspective.

As determinate from the data collected and presented, both certificated as well as classified staff members indicate positive support for the PeaceBuilder program. In year one of implementation, the staff members at Winchester not only employ the program on various levels, they also believe their utilization of the various program components contributes positively to student behavior. The data analyzed from staff surveys affirm the use of PraiseNotes in managing student behavior as well as the promotion of pro social behavior. The data also indicates that staff members have responded positively to the implementation of the PeaceBuilders program.

The data retrieved from SASI, however reports different results. It witnessed a significant increase in student behavior problems. As previously alluded to, the management of student behavior is affected by a variety of variables - many of which school personnel assume little or no control.

One of these variables is an increase in student enrollment, thus an increase in student behavior management. During any given school day, each teacher in grades K - 3 must manage an average of 20 possible outcomes for each of their students with whom they interact, while teachers in the 4th and 5th grades must manage 32 possible outcomes. The student population from the 2005 school year increased by 123 students school wide, at the time of data collection. These numbers paint a picture of the multitude of options available to practitioners because each student will respond differently, based on the internal and external factors previously mentioned, to different discipline techniques utilized by school personnel.

Subjectivity, a natural occurrence by all human beings and individuals working with students at the site, plays a vital role in the type and severity of offenses assigned for administrative intervention as opposed to those teachers who manage student behavior utilizing personal means and ideology, without the intervention of administrative personnel. Each of the fifty-eight (58) staff members at Winchester interpret and define student behaviors differently. While the PeaceBuilder program creates a similar language school wide, the practice and utilization of that language, inevitably, varies from one staff member to the other. Therefore, individuality and subjectivity can not be displaced from the equation.

The inception of NCLB coupled with a slow and inevitable shift in the historical focus of public education, have produced the legal necessity for concrete means to measure student, and as a result, teacher accountability in core subject taught in public schools. Character education is one of the most single and highly subjective constituents in the equation, in the education of students.

Unlike subjects such as language arts, writing and mathematics, the character development of students exists without means to measure whether or not learning is taking place. There does not exist a rubric which clearly assimilates and standardizes pro social behavior.

An additional factor affecting data results in the implementation of the program, is the actual implementation and utilization of the program. First year Principal at Winchester School, Mark Delano, recognizes that the PeaceBuilders program has not been fully implemented and many new staff members, including the assistant principal have not been trained in the program. Many of the authors cited in the literature review, support the importance of staff development during the onset of the implementation of any program. This is an essential element in the implementation process as it introduces and indoctrinates the practitioner to practices which serve to present the program for maximum effectiveness. There are several staff members who did not receive the initial PeaceBuilder training conducted at the commencement of the 2006 school year. Furthermore, this school year marks the second year of utilization. Renewal of the site license, for a second year, would provide additional materials, support and training. Without full implementation, it is difficult to definitively ascertain the programs' effectiveness. Additionally, the 2005 school year welcomed a 1st year administrator at the school site, in addition to several novice teachers and support staff. The 2006 school year marked the inception of the PeaceBuilders program at Winchester, concurrent to a new administrator as educational leader. At the commencement of the 2007 school year, a change in administration also occurred therefore producing a disconnect from the previous administrators policies and practices. Additionally, new certificated and classified staff members were hired.

Recommendations

In consideration of the effectiveness of the PeaceBuilder program, the following recommendations have come to light. Primarily, administration must take the next steps to fully

implement the program. First year, Assistant Principal at Winchester, Tracy Chambers, believes that the minimal effectiveness of the program has less to do with the program components but more to do with its implementation. She asserts, "I was not present during the initial implementation but my impression has been that not enough training took place on how to implement the program. Bits and pieces seem to be used, but not as a comprehensive program".

Finally, training and staff development is another area in need of examination. With two new administrators, eight new certificated staff members, and five new classified staff members, the entire staff should be trained in implementing the various components of the program. Mark Delano, principal at Winchester states, "I would like to be trained in the program and have all staff members trained. I think there should be a committee made up of representatives from each grade level to support the implementation of the program".

The data retrieved from the SASI system is highly skewed due to the major increase in student population. One other recommendation which came to light as a result of this study, is the need for a longitudinal study which examines the impact of the PeaceBuilders program on student behavior, beginning with students who are in the 1st grade of this school year. These students would have participated in the program as Kindergartners and would have been exposed to its principals and components from the commencement of their education at Winchester Elementary School. This study, along with staff development for all new members and full implementation of all program components, would provide a more accurate measurement of the program's impact.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this case study was to examine the impact of the PeaceBuilders program, a character education based curriculum on student behavior at Winchester Elementary School. The data analyzed through practitioner surveys - both certificated and classified staff members - indicates a positive effect on student behavior. The data retrieved from the SASI system, influenced by a dramatic increase in student population, demonstrates a rise in reported discipline problems. Based on the current practitioners of the program and in considerations of the factors which contribute to ineffectiveness, the PeaceBuilders' program has minimally impacted student behavior at Winchester Elementary School.

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Appendix A.

PeaceBuilders Teacher's Survey

Please rate the following questions from 1 to 4:

- 1. How effective is the PeaceBuilder program in reducing negative student behavior in your classroom?**

1	2	3	4
Not at all Effective			Very Effective/ To a great extent

- 2. How effective is the PeaceBuilder program in reducing negative student behavior on the playground/lunchroom?**

1	2	3	4
Not at all Effective			Very Effective/ To a great extent

- 3. How much time do you spend implementing the PeaceBuilders program, per day?**

5 - 15 minutes	15 - 30 minutes	30 - 45 minutes
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- 4. PeaceBuilders is effective in producing pro social behavior in my class.**

1	2	3	4
Not at all Effective			Very Effective/ To a great extent

Appendix B.

PeaceBuilder Program Administrator Survey

1. What is your perception of how effective the program was implemented in its initial year?
2. What do you attribute to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the program?
3. Would you continue the program as it currently is or what alteration would you make to meet the needs of Winchester School?

Any further comments:

Appendix C.



WINCHESTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

OFFICE DISCIPLINE REFERRAL

28751 Winchester Rd. Winchester, CA 92596 (951) 926-0700 FAX (951) 926-0706

Student's Name		Grade	Referring Staff
Date of Occurrence	Time	Location	

INCIDENT: 	<div style="text-align: center;">OFFICE ACTION (To Be Filled By an Administrator)</div> <div style="padding-left: 10px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> PARENT CONTACT <input type="checkbox"/> SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT/RELATIVE TO INFRACTION <input type="checkbox"/> BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PLAN <input type="checkbox"/> MENTOR ASSIGNED <input type="checkbox"/> IN SCHOOL SUSPENSION (ISS) <input type="checkbox"/> SUSPENSION <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER/ADMINISTRATOR'S NOTES </div>
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TEACHER ACTION	Date of Contact	Date Assigned	
1 Teacher/Student Conference/Parent Contact.			
2 Teacher/Student/Parent Conference (loss of privilege).			
3 Teacher/Student/Parent Contract (loss of privilege).			
4 Referral to Administrator Follow 1 through 4 progression...			

STUDENT SIGNATURE _____
 ADMIN. _____

Copies: White—Office Yellow—Student Pink—Teacher