

# Core Measures

## ShowMe CHARACTER™

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Provided in this report are the research hypotheses that have been used in the character education research projects, the newest surveys and forms being used to provide data to test the hypotheses, and the operational definitions of the factors being measured. The factors assessed are the core principles that the character education projects have been designed to impact.

Underpinning these character education projects is Glasser's assertion<sup>1</sup> that optimum educational results occur when students feel that they have a say in their own education, believe that they belong to the educational community, and perceive that they are competent to succeed in the educational process. High quality character education training and support focus on these beliefs as the foundation for effectively developing healthy schools with few discipline problems and high academic achievement. These aspects of quality are referred to as the ABCs of Healthy Schools –

**A** for students' sense of autonomy and influence

**B** for students' feeling of belonging

**C** for students' belief in their own competence.

The following character education projects were designed to meet these ideals and were funded under the following grants from the Partnerships in Character Education Program, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, U.S. Department of Education:

R215S020232	40 Schools	2002-2006	Cooperating School Districts, St. Louis, Mo.
R215V020032	64 Schools	2002-2006	State of Missouri
Q215S040073	46 Schools	2004-2006	Baldwin County (Ala)
Q215S060127	78 Schools	2006-2010	Madison County (Ill.)

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<sup>1</sup> Glasser, W. (1998), *Control Theory*. NY: HarperCollins, Publishers, Inc. Glasser, W. (1969), *Schools Without Failure*. NY: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.

## ShowMe Character Core Measures

**Research Hypothesis 1.** Elementary, middle and high school students in treatment schools will demonstrate statistically significant ( $p \leq .05$ ) positive change in fundamental traits associated with healthy schools compared to students in control schools.

**ShowMe Student Survey.** Data are collected using the student survey each February at identified grade levels in elementary, middle and high schools.

### Operational Definitions for Student Survey Factors

- *Students' Feelings of Belonging*  
Students are nice to each other; they get along; they respect their teachers; they treat each other fairly, and they tell the truth.
- *Students' Sense of School as a Community*  
Students believe that the school is like a family; students help each other learn and treat each other with respect; they work together to solve problems and feel good when someone does well.
- *Autonomy and Influence*  
Students believe that they plan things together with their teachers, have a say in what goes on in their classes, decide the rules together with their teachers, help plan what they do in school, are asked by their teachers to help decide what they are to do, and help decide rules for the school.
- *Feelings of Competence*  
Students believe that they can do the school work teachers ask of them, do not have difficulty with their school work or figuring things out, do not worry when they have to take a test, find school work easy to understand, and that teachers' expectations are reasonable.
- *School Safety*  
Students believe that teachers in this school care that they are safe; students feel safe when at school; students do not pick on (or bully) others; students respect school property; students feel safe going to and from school; and students do not take things that do not belong to them.
- *Parent Involvement at School*  
Parents volunteer to help with school activities, attend parent-teacher conferences, talk with teachers about their children's progress in school, and attend school activities.

## ShowMe Character Core Measures

- *Parent Involvement at Home*

Parents set study times at home, are interested in what their children are doing at school, go over student's homework, talk with the student about what s/he is doing in school, and set up a place at home for their children to do homework.

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**Research Hypothesis 2.** Students in treatment schools will demonstrate statistically significant ( $p \leq .05$ ) improvement in behavior as compared to students in control schools.

**Student Behavior Tracking Form.** The Student Referral Form is an optical scan form that is maintained by the principal or other administrator(s) in each building. Every office referral that is evaluated by the school administrator to warrant "write-up" at the school level is recorded on the referral form. The information collected includes the date of referral, time of day, location of problem, and type of problem categorized in one of four areas: Actions against people, Actions against property, Failure to comply, or Unauthorized possession.

**Research Hypothesis 3.** Students in treatment schools will demonstrate statistically significant ( $p \leq .05$ ) positive improvement in math, reading and writing achievement levels as compared to students in comparison schools.

**Source of Data.** The achievement data used to assess this hypothesis are drawn from the state-wide student testing done each spring. The data are usually available the following August or September.

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**Research Hypothesis 4.** Randomly selected parents of students in treatment schools will demonstrate statistically significant ( $p \leq .05$ ) positive change in fundamental school climate factors as compared to parents in control schools.

**ShowMe Parent Survey.** Data are collected from randomly selected parents of students in elementary, middle and high school using the parent survey each January.

### Operational Definitions for Parent Survey Factors

- *Students' Feelings of Belonging*

Parents perceive that students are nice to each other; they get along; they respect their teachers; they treat each other fairly, and they tell the truth.

- *Students' Sense of School as a Community*

Parents perceive that students feel that the school is like a family; students help each other learn and treat each other with respect; they work together to solve problems and feel good when someone does well.

## ShowMe Character Core Measures

- *Parent & Staff Relations*

School staff members treat parents with respect, make parents feel welcome at school, value parents' ideas and input, encourage parents to be involved in school, communicate effectively with parents, and care about parents and their families.

- *School Quality*

Parents believe that their children are learning how to work with and respect others, learning to read and write, learning about science and how to do math; and are receiving a well-rounded excellent education.

- *Parent Involvement at School*

Parents volunteer to help with school activities, attend parent-teacher conferences, talk with teachers about their children's progress in school, and attend school activities.

- *Parent Involvement at Home*

Parents set study times at home, are interested in what their children are doing at school, go over student's homework, talk with the student about what s/he is doing in school, and set up a place at home for their children to do homework.

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**Research Hypothesis 5.** Staff in treatment schools will demonstrate statistically significant ( $p \leq .05$ ) positive change in fundamental school climate factors as compared to staff in control schools.

**ShowMe Staff Survey.** Data are collected from all certified staff using the staff survey each February in elementary, middle and high schools.

### Operational Definitions for Staff Survey Factors

- *Students' Feelings of Belonging*

Staff members perceive that students are nice to each other; they get along; they respect their teachers; they treat each other fairly, and they tell the truth.

- *Students' Sense of School as a Community*

Staff members perceive that students feel that the school is like a family; students help each other learn and treat each other with respect; they work together to solve problems and feel good when someone does well.

- *Autonomy and Influence*

Staff members perceive that students feel that they plan things together with their teachers, have a say in what goes on in their classes, decide the rules together with their teachers, help plan what they do in school, are asked by their teachers to help decide what they are to do, and help decide rules for the school.

## ShowMe Character Core Measures

- *Parent & Staff Relations*

School staff members treat parents with respect, make parents feel welcome at school, value parents' ideas and input, encourage parents to be involved in school, communicate effectively with parents, and care about students' families.

- *Staff Culture of Belonging*

School staff members are supportive of one another, cooperative, and help each other; provide good counsel when there are teaching problems; share the same beliefs about the central mission of the school; and do not fall into conflicting cliques.

- *School Leadership*

Administrators actively support new ideas; teachers take active roles in school activities; things are well organized; staff members are recognized for a job well done; staff members are involved in decisions that affect them; and there is interest in innovation and new ideas.

- *Parent Involvement at School*

Parents volunteer to help with school activities, attend parent-teacher conferences, talk with teachers about their children's progress in school, and attend school activities.

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**Research Hypothesis 6.** Staff in treatment schools will demonstrate statistically significant ( $p \leq .05$ ) higher levels of implementation of the fundamental components of the character education process than staff in control schools.

**ShowMe Staff Survey.** Data are collected from all certified staff using the implementation survey each February in elementary, middle and high schools.

### Operational Definitions for Implementation Survey Factors

- *School is a Learning Community*

The school has a safe, orderly learning environment; students are supported emotionally and academically; parents have opportunities to experience the school as a learning community; school leaders understand the characteristics of a program to build a caring environment; administration, staff, and students share the core values of the school.

- *School Leadership*

District leaders visit the school on a regular basis; school climate data are collected from parents, students, staff, and community members; staff analyze and discuss the implications of data collected from parents, staff, and students; budget and other resources are provided to develop and sustain a caring school environment; and school and district leaders support implementation of a program to build positive school climate.

## ShowMe Character Core Measures

- *School Climate*

Staff create partnerships with parents; students take part in setting classroom norms and rules; student pairs work collaboratively on activities that are aligned to the academic curriculum; students learn to work cooperatively; and students feel competent that they can achieve academic success.

- *Staff Collaboration*

Teachers collaborate on instructional planning; staff share ideas, strategies, and successes; staff form collaborative teams; staff engage together in reflection on the results of instructional activities; and teachers take a major role in shaping the school's norms, values, and practices.

- *Application and Skills*

Cross-age student pairs engage in interviewing, listening, speaking, and helping; students are taught to reflect on their personal values; take-home activities relate to academic, social, citizenship themes that are important to the instructional program; reflection is encouraged on what has been learned from experiences of working together; and students have a sense of democratic values.

- *Ten Essentials*

Specific character traits have been defined for this school (or district); Students reflect on character traits in our education process; character education is defined in terms of core ethical values; character traits defined for this school/district include both thinking and feeling; district commitment for the character education processes is evident by high levels of continuous support; our character process is infused throughout the school day; all school staff help carry out the school's character education process; our character education process is planned and proactive; frequent communications on character education are common among the school, parents, and broader community; regular assessments are made of students, parents, and staff to check the impact of the character education process.

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