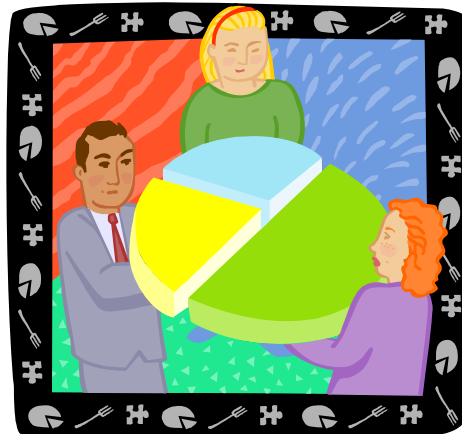


Estimating Relationships Between Program Implementation and Academic and Behavioral Outcomes:

An Evaluation of Three Models of Character Education in Maryland



Maryland Partnerships in Character Education – Program Evaluation

PCEP Grant Number: R215V020026

Research and Evaluation Group

Office of Comprehensive Planning and School Support

Division of Student, Family, and School Support

Maryland State Department of Education

October 15, 2007

Table of Contents

List of Tables	i
Executive Summary	1
Background and Purpose	3
Three Models of Character Education in Maryland	3
Purpose of the Study	6
Methods	7
Participants	7
Evaluation Outcomes	8
Additional Project Outcomes	9
Implementation Index	10
Research Design	10
Results: Project Objectives	10
Predicted Direct Student Effects: Academic Achievement and Behavior	10
Predicted Intermediate Student Effects: Parent and Community Involvement	13
Results: Study Outcomes	14
Comparison of Performance Outcomes in Schools With Low and High Program Implementation	15
Program Evaluations	18
Second Step [®] Evaluation	18
Carroll County Evaluation	26
Character Counts! Mid-Shore Evaluation	38
Discussion	48
References	54
Appendix A: Second Step [®] Implementation Assessment	55
Appendix B: Carroll County Implementation Assessment	60
Appendix C: Character Counts! Implementation Assessment	69

List of Tables

Table 1. Number of Participating Schools in Each Program, By School Year	8
Table 2. Number of Participating Schools in Each Program, By School Year and School Level	8
Table 3. Performance on Project Objective 6	11
Table 4. Performance on Project Objective 7	13
Table 5. Mean Performance Outcomes, by Program, 2004-2005	15
Table 6. Mean Performance Outcomes, by Program, 2005-2006	15
Table 7. Performance Outcomes, by Level of Implementation, 2004-2005	16
Table 8. Estimated Effects of Implementation on Performance Outcomes, 2004-2005	16
Table 9. Performance Outcomes, by Level of Implementation, 2005-2006	17
Table 10. Estimated Effects of Implementation on Performance Outcomes, 2005-2006	18
Table 11. Demographics of Anne Arundel County Second Step [®] Schools	19
Table 12. Second Step [®] Implementation Index	20
Table 13. Number of Second Step [®] Schools by Level of Implementation	20
Table 14. Number of Second Step [®] Schools by Level of Implementation, by School Level	20
Table 15. Performance of Participating Anne Arundel County Schools on Project Objective 6	20
Table 16. Performance of Participating Anne Arundel County Schools on Project Objective 7	21
Table 17. Second Step [®] Performance Outcomes, by Level of Implementation, 2004-2005	22
Table 18. Estimated Effects of Second Step [®] Implementation on Performance Outcomes, 2004-2005	23
Table 19. Second Step [®] Performance Outcomes, by Level of Implementation, 2005-2006	24
Table 20. Estimated Effects of Second Step [®] Implementation on Performance Outcomes, 2005-2006	24
Table 21. Demographics of Carroll County Schools	28
Table 22. Carroll County Implementation Index	29
Table 23. Number of Carroll County Schools by Level of Implementation	29
Table 24. Number of Carroll County Schools by Level of Implementation, by School Level	29
Table 25. Performance of Carroll County Schools on Project Objective 6	30
Table 26. Performance of Carroll County Schools on Project Objective 7	31
Table 27. Carroll County Performance Outcomes, by Level of Implementation, 2004-2005	32
Table 28. Estimated Effects of Carroll County Implementation on Performance Outcomes, 2004-2005	32
Table 29. Carroll County Performance Outcomes, by Level of Implementation, 2005-2006	34
Table 30. Estimated Effects of Carroll County Implementation on Performance Outcomes, 2005-2006	34
Table 31. Performance Outcomes, by Carroll County Region, 2004-2005	36
Table 32. Performance Outcomes, by Carroll County Region, 2005-2006	36

Table 33. Performance Outcomes, by Carroll County Region and Level of Implementation, 2004-2005	37
Table 34. Performance Outcomes, by Carroll County Region and Level of Implementation, 2005-2006	37
Table 35. Demographics of Character Counts! Mid-Shore Schools	39
Table 36. Demographics of Character Counts! Mid-Shore Schools by Local School System	39
Table 37. Character Counts! Mid-Shore Implementation Index	40
Table 38. Number of Character Counts! Mid-Shore Schools by Level of Implementation	40
Table 39. Number of Character Counts! Mid-Shore Schools by Local School System and Level of Implementation	40
Table 40. Number of Character Counts! Mid-Shore Schools by Level of Implementation, by School Level	41
Table 41. Performance of Character Counts! Mid-Shore Schools on Project Objective 6	41
Table 42. Performance of Character Counts! Mid-Shore Schools on Project Objective 7	43
Table 43. Character Counts! Mid-Shore Performance Outcomes, by Level of Implementation, 2004-2005	44
Table 44. Estimated Effects of Character Counts! Mid-Shore Implementation on Performance Outcomes, 2004-2005	44
Table 45. Character Counts! Mid-Shore Performance Outcomes, by Level of Implementation, 2005-2006	46
Table 46. Estimated Effects of Character Counts! Mid-Shore Implementation on Performance Outcomes, 2005-2006	46
Table 47. Summary of Program Outcomes	49
Table 48. Comparison of Program Effect Sizes, 2004-2005	51
Table 49. Comparison of Program Effect Sizes, 2005-2006	51

Executive Summary

In October 2002, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), in partnership with two school systems (Anne Arundel and Carroll Counties) and Character Counts! Mid-Shore, a non-profit agency, received funding from the U. S. Department of Education to evaluate the behavioral and academic outcomes of three different approaches to character education. Anne Arundel County, an urban/suburban school system, used the Second Step[®] violence-prevention program. Carroll County, a suburban school system, designed a character education program by modifying Thomas Lickona's approach to character education. Five rural school systems on the Eastern Shore of Maryland (Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot Counties) worked with Character Counts! Mid-Shore to implement character education in the communities and the schools.

At the outset of the Maryland Partnerships in Character Education program in 2002, program managers at MSDE, in collaboration with partnering district character education leaders, identified specific project objectives.

Project Objective 6: By 2005, all participating schools will evidence an increase in student participation, pro-social behaviors, and academic success as measured by data on attendance, office referrals, suspension, and honor roll achievement.

Project Objective 7: By the year 2005, parents and other community members will become more active participants compared to the 2002-03 baseline year in all participating schools as evidenced through volunteer activities and mentoring roles.

In addition to measuring the performance of the grant partners in achieving these project objectives, the evaluation examined the relationship between program implementation and academic and behavior outcomes. The purpose of this evaluation was to determine what relationship existed, if any, between the degree of program implementation and academic and behavioral outcomes. If the character education initiatives were having the desired effects, one would expect to see higher attendance, promotion, and math and reading proficiency rates, and lower suspension and offender rates, in schools with high levels of implementation.

A total of 102 schools in seven local school systems participated in this initiative during the 2005-2006 school year. The project demonstrated positive student behavior effects in terms of decreased office referral rates in 48.3% of schools; decreased suspension rates in 43.0% of schools; and a significant relationship between implementation and suspension rates between implementation and offender rates. Positive student academic effects were also noted in terms of increased attendance rates in 67.7% of schools and a significant relationship between implementation and attendance rates ($p = .0065$, $d = 0.90$); increased honor roll rates in 77.3% of schools; and a significant relationship between implementation and math proficiency rates ($p = .0284$, $d = 0.69$), and reading proficiency rates ($p = .0099$, $d = 0.82$).¹

¹ Effect size was calculated using Cohen's d statistic. See Research Design (page 10) for more details.

The project also demonstrated positive intermediate student effects through parent and community involvement: there was increased volunteering by parents and other adults in 75.0% of schools and increased mentoring by parents and other adults in 23.4% of schools.

The Maryland Partnerships in Character Education project demonstrated the greatest effect in the 2004-2005 school year, overall. This evaluation found the largest effect sizes in the Second Step[®] program in terms of suspension and offender rates. Large effect sizes were also found in the Character Counts! Mid-Shore program, which was effective in terms of both behavior and academic outcomes. The Carroll County program did demonstrate positive improvements in outcomes, although statistical significance was not attained.

There were a number of lessons learned from the Maryland Partnerships in Character Education project that have implications for future character education programming in the state. One of the most important of these was that character education program managers at the state education department and in local school systems should work with state and district leadership to ensure alignment of program goals with overall goals and planning. In Maryland, the outset of this character education grant coincided with the outset of federal and state school reform efforts. Both the No Child Left Behind Act and Maryland's signature Bridge to Excellence in Education Act prompted state and local officials to prioritize academic achievement. While character education can certainly contribute to this effort, as the present study attests, state and local policymakers did not consistently envision character education programming as a priority. This limited the focus and administrative resources that were accorded to the program. Future efforts should foster collaborative efforts to align the unique methods and objectives of character education with other educational initiatives. It is hoped that the analysis provided in this evaluation will be helpful in Maryland's continuing efforts to improve the educational experiences of all children.

Background and Purpose

Three Models of Character Education in Maryland

In October 2002, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), in partnership with two school systems (Anne Arundel and Carroll Counties) and Character Counts! Mid-Shore, a non-profit agency, received funding from the U. S. Department of Education to evaluate the behavioral and academic outcomes of three different approaches to character education. Anne Arundel County, an urban school system, used the Second Step[®] violence-prevention program (Committee for Children, 1992). Carroll County, a suburban school system, designed a character education program by modifying Thomas Lickona's approach to character education. Five rural school systems on the Eastern Shore of Maryland (Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot Counties) worked with Character Counts! Mid-Shore to implement character education in the communities and the schools.

Second Step

Second Step[®] is a violence-prevention program using empathy training, impulse control and problem solving, and anger/emotion management. Students are taught skills in these areas through the use of discussion, role-play, and modeling. Although it is a stand-alone curriculum, the techniques taught by Second Step[®] are intended to be connected to the academic curriculum and reinforced by school personnel throughout the school day at "teachable moments." The social skills taught by Second Step are also intended to be reinforced by parents and family members at home; thus, the curriculum provides ways for schools to secure buy-in from parents. Parents of students in preschool through fifth grade can follow a six-week training program, while parents of middle-schoolers can attend Family Night programs. The curriculum also provides templates for Take-Home Letters to facilitate communication between school personnel and family members about the social skills their children are learning and how to reinforce them at home.

Staff members from participating schools are trained by Second Step[®] trainers, and these school staff members, in turn, train other school personnel. The curriculum is provided for Preschool/Kindergarten, Grades 1 to 3, Grades 4 to 5, and Middle School/Junior High. If implemented with fidelity, fifty-minute lessons are presented regularly at one- or two-week intervals.

The Carroll County Model

The Carroll County public school system developed its character education program based on values identified by a community survey in 1998. These values emphasized the necessity of reinforcing character education among school, family, and community. The program began countywide in the 1999-2000 school year in all schools.

Central to the Carroll County school system's character education goals was the importance of adults throughout the community modeling good character. Thus, the program emphasized the need for all adults in the school, family, and community to model and reinforce positive character traits. The

county's character education activities focused on leadership and staff development designed to change school climate and set positive examples for students.

A steering committee met every other month to plan activities and write a monthly newsletter, which was sent to about 300 community organizations and parents. The Chamber of Commerce used excerpts in their monthly magazine. In addition, the committee produced a daily 27-second local radio spot on the trait of the month, paid for by about 10 local businesses.

Each school improvement team developed its own programs and activities based on the monthly traits and the county's character education goals, ranging from bulletin board displays and morning announcements, to curricular tie-ins using grade-appropriate reading materials that discussed relevant character traits, to community service activities such as food drives and "support our troops" boxes.

Teachers and school staff attended character education/discipline committee meetings every other month where they shared best practices, heard presentations, and participated in small-group activities. Attendees then shared program ideas and information with their principals.

Carroll County hosted four annual Character Education Institutes, which were predominantly attended by teachers and staff and featured keynote speakers and breakout sessions. The goal was to provide participants with strategies to take back to their classrooms.

All ninth graders participated in a daily, 90-minute freshman seminar for one quarter. They used the text *Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens* (Covey, 1998). The course consisted of four areas: orientation, career and education planning, study skills, and character education and service learning. Students (mostly ninth and tenth graders) identified as social "leaders" by school staff were asked to attend a "Leadership Day." The focus was on ethics, leadership within the school, community service, and changing society. Students' opinions about how to change their school to be more responsive to students' needs were solicited, and they presented their ideas to their schools' principals.

Character education program managers at the Carroll County school system identified a specific need in the northwest region of the county. They identified needs based on findings of relatively high rates of poverty, drug use by parents, and family dysfunction. They identified a lack of capacity in the community to adjust to new growth and diversity in the area. The Carroll County school system created a Parent-Community Liaison position to direct a program in three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school in this region of the county. The Parent-Community Liaison worked with staff and students from these schools to promote achievement, attendance, and parent involvement. In conjunction with the pupil personnel worker for the area, the liaison made home visits and conducted student-led conferences with parents. Other programs and activities coordinated by the liaison included:

- A mentorship program pairing eleventh and twelfth graders from the public high school with elementary and middle-school students;

- A mentorship program pairing students from a local private, group-oriented residential school for court committed young men with elementary and middle-school students;
- After-school programs in the elementary schools;
- A holiday program with members of a local senior citizen center;
- A motivational speaker for the high school students;
- Promoting kindness, peace, and understanding in schools;
- Working with parents who need assistance by connecting with agencies in the community;
- Encouraging parents to get involved with their student at home and in school; and
- Working with the Crisis Intervention Specialist to provide parent workshops designed to improve parents' communication with the student and establish positive relationships in the family.

Character Counts! Mid-Shore

Character Counts! Mid-Shore is a non-profit organization headquartered in Easton, Maryland, in Talbot County on the state's eastern shore. This organization is based on the Josephson Institute's Character Counts! model, but goes further to incorporate other program components designed or adapted by the Mid-Shore organization. The Character Counts! program, begun in 1993 by the Josephson Institute of Ethics, is not limited to implementation in schools but rather is a community-wide program whose purpose was to increase ethical behavior among children. The Character Counts! coalition holds that certain values are universal and transcend political and social differences. These values are the "Six Pillars of Character": Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship. The model is based on the importance of adults teaching and modeling ethical behavior for children (Josephson Institute of Ethics, 2007).

The Character Counts! Mid-Shore program provided several school-based initiatives in Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot Counties. The in-school activities addressed students of different age groups. The "Winners Walk Tall" program for elementary and middle schools trained community volunteers to serve as "Character Coaches" in weekly classroom presentations. In these presentations, volunteers shared personal experiences and led classes in activities to operationalize the program's six character ideals. Classroom teachers reinforced the messages of these presentations by infusing them into the curriculum. The "Take Five for Character" sports ethics program trained volunteer coaches in youth sports leagues to facilitate team discussion of ethical situations that arise in a variety of sports. The "Laws of Life" essay contest, based on the essay contest designed by the Templeton Foundation, offered students in middle and high schools the opportunity to think about character traits that were important to them. Winners were chosen by Mid-Shore leadership and a winner from each school received a cash prize. In addition, schools developed their own ways of publicizing the principles of character (e.g., bulletin board displays, daily public announcements, or

recognition of students who demonstrate good character). School administration and staff supported the program.

Purpose of the Study

At the outset of the Maryland Partnerships in Character Education program in 2002, program managers at MSDE, in collaboration with partnering district character education leaders, identified specific project objectives. Pursuant to federal performance objectives, two of these objectives specified the direct and intermediate student effects that program managers expected to see by the conclusion of the project. The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) indicator for the PCEP Program is: Partnerships in Character Education Program grantees will demonstrate predicted student effects through valid, rigorous evaluations. The GPRA measure is: The proportion of projects funded under this competition demonstrating predicted student effects through valid, rigorous evaluations would increase. The original grant proposal identified the following objectives related to the GPRA indicator:

Project Objective 6: By 2005, all participating schools will evidence an increase in student participation, pro-social behaviors, and academic success as measured by data on attendance, office referrals, suspension, and honor roll achievement.

Project Objective 7: By the year 2005, parents and other community members will become more active participants compared to the 2002-03 baseline year in all participating schools as evidenced through volunteer activities and mentoring roles.

The following outcome measures listed in the legislation were identified in the original grant proposal:

Direct Student Effects: Discipline Issues and Academic Achievement

Intermediate Student Effects: Parental and Community Involvement

To determine success on Project Objective 6, the following outcome measures were used: attendance rates, office referral rates, suspension rates, and honor roll rates. To determine success on Project Objective 7, the following outcome measures were used: number of visits by adult volunteers and number of visits by adult mentors. Project leaders set high targets for these objectives: they expected *all* participating schools to demonstrate improvements.

In addition to measuring the performance of the grant partners in achieving these project objectives, the evaluation examined the relationship between program implementation and academic and behavior outcomes. This evaluation enabled program managers to determine program effectiveness in a more refined manner than with the status of project objectives alone. Regardless of whether the project was successful in demonstrating improvement in all participating schools, character education managers wanted to know the relative effect of program implementation on performance outcomes. It was understood that schools involved in the project would implement the program models

to varying extents. Thus, the schools with the highest levels of program implementation would be expected to demonstrate the greatest success.

A grant-funded evaluator worked with program managers since the beginning of the grant period in 2003. An initial evaluation report was written at the end of the first year in 2004. The first-year evaluation examined the impact of each character education program on academic achievement and behavior. The research design of the first evaluation was tailored to the specific nature of each program. For the Second Step[®] program, outcomes for the 2002-2003 school year were compared to the outcomes for the year prior to implementation. Schools were grouped based on the number of years of continuous implementation of Second Step[®]. Thus, the change in outcomes in schools with only one year of implementation were compared to the change in outcomes in schools with two years of program implementation. For the modified Lickona model in Carroll County, outcomes for the 2002-2003 school year were compared to the outcomes for the year prior to implementation. However, schools were grouped based on their level of implementation as assessed by a survey conducted in the spring of 2003. Thus, the change in performance of schools with low implementation was compared to that in schools with high implementation. The effectiveness of the program was ascertained by identifying significant differences between schools based on implementation level. For the Character Counts! program, program effectiveness was similarly based on level of implementation. Community-based coordinators in each local school system determined implementation levels. However, outcome measures were not based on comparing performance prior to program implementation against current year performance, due to the limited availability of data. Instead, data for a single year only (2002-2003) were examined for differences in low versus high implementation schools.

The next stage of the evaluation, which this report details, examined performance outcomes for the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years, using customized implementation assessments. The purpose of this evaluation was to determine what relationship existed, if any, between the degree of program implementation and academic and behavioral outcomes. If the character education initiatives were having the desired effects, one would expect to see higher attendance, promotion, and math and reading proficiency rates, and lower suspension and offender rates, in schools with high levels of implementation.

Methods

Participants

A total of 102 schools in seven local school systems participated in this initiative during the 2005-2006 school year. Table 1 displays the number of participating schools for both the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years for each program and overall.

Table 1. Number of Participating Schools in Each Program, By School Year

School Year	Second Step [®]	Carroll County	Character Counts! Mid-Shore	Total
2004-2005	11	39	49	99
2005-2006	13	40	49	102

Of these 102 schools, there were 60 elementary, 5 elementary/middle, 19 middle, 2 middle/high, 15 high, and 1 elementary/middle/high schools. Table 2 displays the number of schools of each type for both school years for each program and overall.

Table 2. Number of Participating Schools in Each Program, By School Year and School Level

School Year	School Level	Second Step [®]	Carroll County	Character Counts! Mid-Shore	Total
2004-2005	Elementary	10	21	27	58
	Elementary/Middle	0	0	5	5
	Middle	1	9	8	18
	Middle/High	0	1	1	2
	High	N/A	7	8	15
	Elementary/Middle/High	0	1	0	1
2005-2006	Elementary	11	22	27	60
	Elementary/Middle	0	0	5	5
	Middle	2	9	8	19
	Middle/High	0	1	1	2
	High	0	7	8	15
	Elementary/Middle/High	0	1	0	1

Evaluation Outcomes

School academic outcomes for all three models were assessed using attendance, promotion rates, dropout rates, and performance on the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) in reading and math. Behavior was assessed by school suspension and offender rates.

Suspension and Offender Rates

Suspension data from the school years 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 were extracted from the annual student level data sets that were provided to MSDE by local school systems. For purposes of this analysis, the numbers of suspensions were aggregated to the school level, as were the number of students suspended. In order to derive a measure of suspensions relative to enrollment, *suspension rates* were calculated by dividing the number of suspensions by the total enrollment. The resulting number indicates the number of suspensions that occurred per each student enrolled. A suspension rate of 14.0 means that for every 100 students enrolled, there were 14 suspensions. The *offender rate* is the percentage of enrolled students who were suspended at least once. Offender rates were calculated by dividing the number of offenders (the unduplicated count of students who were suspended) by the

total enrollment. An offender rate of 14.0 means that 14 percent of the student population was suspended at least once.

Attendance, Promotion, and Dropout Rates

Annual attendance, promotion, and dropout rates for each school were extracted from MSDE databases and were assessed at the school level. Attendance rates were defined as the percentage of students present in school for at least half the average school day during the school year. Promotion rates were defined as the percentage of enrolled students promoted to the next grade. Dropout rates were defined as the percentage of enrolled students who left the school without enrolling in another school. Dropout rates were calculated for high schools only.

Maryland School Assessments (MSA)

The Maryland School Assessments began in the 2002-2003 school year and are the State's accountability measure under the No Child Left Behind Act.² MSA math and reading proficiency rates for each school were extracted from MSDE databases. Proficiency rates were defined as the percentage of students achieving "proficient" or "advanced."

Additional Project Outcomes

Additional measures of student academic performance and behavior, as well as parent and community involvement, were used to assess the performance of participating schools in meeting project objectives, but were not used in the evaluation study. These additional measures were office referral rates, honor roll rates, number of visits by adults volunteering in school, and number of visits by adults mentoring students in school.

Office Referral Rates

Referral rates were calculated by dividing the sum number of office referrals for the school year by the September 30 enrollment.

Honor Roll Rates

Honor roll rates were calculated by dividing the sum number of students on honor roll for the school year by the September 30 enrollment. Honor roll data was collected for middle and high schools, where applicable. Honor roll policies and practices vary among local school systems.

Adult Volunteers

The sum number of visits to the school by adult volunteers.

² In 2002-2003, schools administered the MSA in reading to students in grades 3, 5, 8, and 10 and the MSA in math to students in grades 3, 5, and 8. High school performance on math was assessed by the Geometry High School Assessment (HSA). In 2003-2004, the assessed elementary and middle grade levels were expanded to include all grades 3 through 8. In 2004-2005, the high school reading assessment was changed from the 10th grade MSA to the English 2 HSA. In 2005-2006, the high school math assessment was changed from the Geometry HSA to the Algebra HSA.

Adult Mentors

The sum number of visits to the school by adult mentors.

Implementation Index

The evaluator developed an implementation assessment for each program in collaboration with the program managers in fall of 2004. Assessments were completed in spring of 2005 and spring of 2006. Assessments were developed in order to require objective observation as much as possible, and to reduce the need for subjective judgment. Assessments were completed by school-based staff members familiar with the program. Analyses of internal consistency were conducted to ascertain the instruments' internal reliability.

To derive an overall implementation score for each school, an implementation index was calculated as the sum of the analysis variables divided by the count of non-missing analysis variables. Implementation was characterized as "low," "medium," or "high" in terms of their quartile ranking in the distribution of the implementation index.

Research Design

The analysis of academic and behavioral effects of the Second Step[®], Carroll County, and Character Counts! Mid-Shore programs employed a quasi-experimental design based on level of implementation. Implementation and outcomes were assessed for the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years. Academic and behavioral effects of program participation were evaluated through a comparison of performance outcomes in schools with varying degrees of program implementation. In particular, academic and behavioral outcomes of programs that were only minimally implemented were compared to those with significant implementations. An independent samples *t* test was employed to determine whether there were significant differences in outcomes when comparing schools with low program implementation to schools with high program implementation. When variances could be assumed with 95% confidence to be equal, the pooled method *t* test was used; when the variances were unequal, the Satterthwaite method was used. Effect size (Cohen's *d*) was calculated using the pooled standard deviation as the denominator (Cohen, 1988; Rosnow & Rosenthal, 1996).

Results: Project Objectives

Predicted Direct Student Effects: Academic Achievement and Behavior

The Maryland Partnerships in Character Education grant proposal identified one project objective involving measures of student achievement and behavior. Project Objective 6 stated that by 2005, all participating schools will evidence an increase in student participation, pro-social behaviors, and academic success as measured by data on attendance, office referrals, suspension, and honor roll achievement. The performance of all schools participating in the grant on these measures is displayed in Table 3.

Table 3. Performance on Project Objective 6

Performance Measure	Target	Actual Performance
Percentage of schools demonstrating an increase in attendance rates	100%	67.7%
Percentage of schools demonstrating a decrease in office referral rates	100%	48.3%
Percentage of schools demonstrating a decrease in suspension rates	100%	43.0%
Percentage of schools demonstrating an increase in honor roll rates	100%	77.3%

The project did not meet its objective of having all participating schools evidence improvements in attendance, referrals, suspensions, and honor roll.

Attendance Rates

The first identified target for the project for Project Objective 6 was that all schools (100%) will show increases in attendance rates. 99 of the 102 schools implementing character education under the PCE grant in 2005-2006 had complete attendance data and were able to be analyzed. Two schools opened during the period of the grant and thus have no baseline data. One school did not have 2005-2006 attendance data available.

Since implementation of the grant began in 2003-2004, attendance rates from the 2002-2003 school year were used as the baseline and were compared to attendance rates in the 2005-2006 school year. Schools that did not begin implementation until the 2004-2005 or 2005-2006 school year were assessed using baseline data from the year prior to implementation. Schools that opened during this period (and thus have no baseline data available), closed, or did not implement the program in 2005-2006 are not included.

Two-thirds of the participating schools, or 67 of 99 schools (67.7%), achieved the target. This is below the objective of 100% of schools increasing their attendance rates. The target was not met. The project objective was for all participating schools to demonstrate an improvement in attendance rates. Only 67 of the 99 schools (67.7%) experienced an increase in attendance. However, further analysis reveals that on average, participating schools did improve attendance by 0.19 percentage points.

It should be noted that statewide, 703 of 1,318 schools (53.3%) demonstrated an increase in attendance rate from 2002-2003 to 2005-2006. The average statewide school increase in attendance rate during this period was 0.06 percentage points. Thus, the schools participating in the grant outperformed the state overall in terms of attendance.

Office Referral Rates

The second identified measure for Project Objective 6 was that of the 102 schools implementing character education under the PCE grant in 2005-2006, all schools (100%) will show decreases in referral rates from 2002-2003 to 2005-2006.

Of the 102 schools, 87 had complete referral data and were able to be analyzed. Two schools opened during the period of the grant and thus have no baseline data. There were 13 schools missing pre and post intervention referral data.

Since implementation of the grant began in 2003-2004, referral rates from the 2002-2003 school year were used as the baseline and were compared to referral rates in the 2005-2006 school year. Schools that did not begin implementation until the 2004-2005 or 2005-2006 school year were assessed using baseline data from the year prior to implementation. Schools that opened during this period (and thus have no baseline data available), closed, or did not implement the program in 2005-2006 are not included.

Of the 87 schools with complete data, 42 (48.3%) achieved the target. This is below the objective of 100% of schools increasing their attendance rates. Overall, however, the 87 schools did show a decline in referral rates (the average decrease was 0.06 percentage points).

The project objective was for all participating schools to demonstrate an improvement in referral rates. This objective was not met. Only 42 of the 87 schools (48.3%) experienced a decrease in referral rates. However, further analysis reveals that on average, participating schools did improve referral rates by 0.06 percentage points.

Suspension Rates

The third measure identified for Project Objective 6 was that of the 102 schools implementing character education under the PCE grant in 2005-2006, all schools (100%) will show decreases in suspension rates from 2002-2003 to 2005-2006.

Of the 102 schools, 100 had complete suspension data and were able to be analyzed. Two schools opened during the period of the grant and thus have no baseline data.

Since implementation of the grant began in 2003-2004, suspension rates from the 2002-2003 school year were used as the baseline and were compared to suspension rates in the 2005-2006 school year. Schools that did not begin implementation until the 2004-2005 or 2005-2006 school year were assessed using baseline data from the year prior to implementation. Schools that opened during this period (and thus have no baseline data available), closed, or did not implement the program in 2005-2006 are not included.

Fewer than half, 43, of the 100 schools with complete data (43.0%) achieved the target. This is below the objective of 100% of schools decreasing their suspension rates. Overall, the 100 schools showed a slight increase in suspension rates (the average increase was 0.0091 percentage points).

The project objective was for all participating schools to demonstrate an improvement in suspension rates. This objective was not met. Only 43 of the 100 schools (43.0%) experienced a decrease in suspension rates. On average, participating schools increased suspension rates by 0.0091 percentage points.

Statewide, 49.4% of schools demonstrated a decrease in suspension rates from 2002-2003 to 2005-2006. The statewide average change in school-level suspension rates was a decrease of 0.014 percentage points.

Honor Roll Rates

The final measure of student achievement identified in the project objectives was that all of the schools implementing character education under the PCE grant in 2005-2006 (100%) will show increases in honor roll rates from 2002-2003 to 2005-2006.

Twenty-two schools had complete honor roll data and were able to be analyzed. Since implementation of the grant began in 2003-2004, honor roll rates from the 2002-2003 school year were used as the baseline and were compared to honor roll rates in the 2005-2006 school year. Schools that did not begin implementation until the 2004-2005 or 2005-2006 school year were assessed using baseline data from the year prior to implementation. Schools that opened during this period (and thus have no baseline data available), closed, or did not implement the program in 2005-2006 are not included.

Of the 22 schools with complete data, 17 (77.3%) achieved the target. This is below the objective of 100% of schools increasing their honor roll rates. Overall, the 22 schools showed an increase in honor roll rates. The average increase was 0.24 percentage points.

The project objective was for all participating schools to demonstrate an improvement in honor roll rates. This objective was not met. Three-quarters of the schools (77.3%) experienced increases in honor roll rates. On average, participating schools increased honor roll rates by 0.24 percentage points. No statewide data on honor roll rates are available, so no comparison to other schools in the state can be made.

Predicted Intermediate Student Effects: Parent and Community Involvement

In addition to the project objectives for direct student effects as indicated by student achievement and behavior, the grant proposal identified in Project Objective 7 that by the year 2005, parents and other community members will become more active participants compared to the 2002-03 baseline year in all participating schools as evidenced through volunteer activities and mentoring roles. The performance of participating schools on this objective is displayed in Table 4.

Table 4. Performance on Project Objective 7

Performance Measure	Target	Actual Performance
Percentage of schools demonstrating an increase in the number of visits by parents and other adults volunteering at school	100%	75.0%
Percentage of schools demonstrating an increase in the number of visits by parents and other adults mentoring at school	100%	23.4%

Adult Volunteers

The first measure identified by the project relative to the involvement of parents and community members was that all of the schools implementing character education under the PCE grant in 2005-2006 (100%) will show increases in the number of visits by adult volunteers from 2002-2003 to 2005-2006.

Three-quarters of the schools with complete data, or 54 of 72 schools (75.0%), showed increases in adult volunteering.

The project objective was for all participating schools to demonstrate an improvement in the number of visits by adult volunteers. This objective was not met. Fifty-four of 72 schools (75.0%) with complete data experienced increases in the number of visits by adult volunteers. On average, participating schools increased the annual number of visits by adult volunteers by 171 visits.

No statewide data on the number of visits by adult volunteers are available, and thus no context for this increase can be provided.

Adult Mentors

The second measure identified in Project Objective 7 was that all of the schools implementing character education under the PCE grant in 2005-2006 (100%) will show increases in the number of visits by adult mentors from 2002-2003 to 2005-2006.

About a quarter of the schools with complete data, 18 of 77 schools (23.4%), showed increases in adult mentoring.

The project objective was for all participating schools to demonstrate an improvement in the number of visits by adult mentors. This objective was not met. Eighteen of 77 schools (23.4%) with complete data experienced increases in the number of visits by adult mentors. On average, participating schools increased the annual number of visits by adult mentors by 3 visits.

No statewide data on the number of visits by adult mentors are available, and thus there is no way to contextualize this increase.

Results: Study Outcomes

The evaluation study examined the performance on selected outcome measures of student achievement and behavior for the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years. This examination took place both overall for the entire project as well as for each of the three program models. Performance data for all schools in each program are presented in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5. Mean Performance Outcomes, by Program, 2004-2005

Program	Suspension Rate	Offender Rate	Attendance Rate	Promotion Rate	Drop-out Rate	Math Proficiency Rate	Reading Proficiency Rate
Second Step [®]	3.6 (11)	2.3 (11)	95.2 (11)	99.0 (11)	N/A	83.3 (11)	82.3 (11)
Carroll County	11.0 (39)	5.2 (39)	95.1 (39)	97.8 (39)	2.10 (9)	75.4 (39)	80.8 (39)
Character Counts!	15.6 (49)	8.2 (49)	93.9 (49)	96.6 (49)	3.41 (9)	65.4 (49)	72.8 (49)

Table 6. Mean Performance Outcomes, by Program, 2005-2006

Program	Suspension Rate	Offender Rate	Attendance Rate	Promotion Rate	Drop-out Rate	Math Proficiency Rate	Reading Proficiency Rate
Second Step [®]	9.6 (13)	4.7 (13)	95.2 (13)	98.9 (13)	N/A	84.0 (13)	83.2 (13)
Carroll County	11.8 (40)	5.7 (40)	95.4 (39)	95.1 (39)	2.35 (8)	80.8 (39)	79.9 (38)
Character Counts!	14.7 (49)	8.3 (49)	94.4 (49)	97.2 (49)	2.79 (10)	73.0 (49)	73.9 (49)

Comparison of Performance Outcomes in Schools With Low and High Program Implementation

This evaluation used a modified comparison group design that compared performances by level of implementation within the analyzed school years (2004-2005 and 2005-2006). Academic and behavioral outcomes in low implementation schools were compared with those in high implementation schools. In effect, low implementation schools served as the baseline assessment against which high implementation programs were compared.

The 2004-2005 School Year

Table 7 displays performance outcomes differentiated by implementation level for the 2004-2005 school year.

Table 7. Performance Outcomes, by Level of Implementation, 2004-2005

Level of Implementation	Suspension Rate	Offender Rate	Attendance Rate	Promotion Rate	Drop-out Rate	Math Proficiency Rate	Reading Proficiency Rate
Low	20.2** (21)	10.0** (21)	94.1** (21)	96.8 (21)	2.9 (7)	65.6* (21)	72.3** (21)
Medium	12.5 (47)	6.2 (47)	94.5 (47)	97.6 (47)	3.3 (7)	73.1 (47)	77.6 (47)
High	3.4** (22)	2.3** (22)	95.2** (22)	97.7 (22)	0.8 (2)	76.9* (22)	81.6** (22)

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

An independent samples t test was employed to determine whether there were significant differences in outcomes when comparing schools with low program implementation to schools with high program implementation. Effect size (d) was calculated along with the amount of variance in the dependent variable accounted for by the independent variable, program implementation level. Effect sizes greater than 0.8 were considered large, while those less than 0.2 were considered small (Cohen, 1988). Data on the estimated effects of program implementation on outcome measures are displayed in Table 8.

Table 8. Estimated Effects of Implementation on Performance Outcomes, 2004-2005

Outcome Measure	Low Implementation		High Implementation		DF	t	p	Cohen's d	r^2
	M	SD	M	SD					
Suspension Rate	20.21	21.04	3.38	3.33	21	3.63	.0016	1.12	.238
Offender Rate	10.00	9.40	2.29	2.26	22.2	3.67	.0013	1.13	.241
Attendance Rate	94.14	1.52	95.19	0.62	26.2	-2.95	.0065	0.90	.170
Promotion Rate	96.83	4.49	97.68	5.33	41	-0.56	.5766	0.17	.007
Dropout Rate	2.92	2.13	0.78	0.21	7	1.35	.2189	1.41	.333
Math Proficiency	65.60	18.55	76.87	13.74	41	-2.27	.0284	0.69	.106
Reading Proficiency	72.32	13.03	81.56	9.08	41	-2.71	.0099	0.82	.145

Suspension rates in schools with low program implementation ($M = 20.2$, $SD = 21.04$) were significantly higher than in schools with high program implementation ($M = 3.4$, $SD = 3.3$), $t(21) = 3.63$, $p = .0016$. The effect size was large ($d = 1.12$); program implementation accounted for 23.8% of the variance in suspension rates ($r^2 = .238$). Similarly, offender rates differed significantly between low- and high-implementation schools ($M = 10.00$, $SD = 9.40$ and $M = 2.29$, $SD = 2.26$, respectively), $t(22.2) = 3.67$, $p = .0013$, with a large effect size ($d = 1.13$, $r^2 = .241$).

Attendance rates in schools where character education was implemented at a low level ($M = 94.14$, $SD = 1.52$) also differed significantly from those in schools where character education was delivered at a high level ($M = 95.19$, $SD = 0.62$), $t(26.2) = -2.95$, $p = .0065$. Effect size was large ($d = 0.90$), with implementation of character education accounting for 17.0% of variance in attendance rates.

Character education programming did not have a sizeable effect on promotion rates. While schools with high levels of program implementation did have slightly higher promotion rates than schools with low levels ($M = 97.68, SD = 5.33$ and $M = 96.83, SD = 4.49$, respectively), the difference was not statistically significant, $t(41) = -0.56, p = .5766, d = 0.17, r^2 = .007$.

While not statistically significant due to the number of high schools involved ($N = 16$), the outcome measure with the largest effect size was dropout rates. Schools with low degrees of program implementation had an average dropout rate of 2.92% ($SD = 2.13$), while those with high levels of implementation average just 0.78% ($SD = 0.21$), $t(7) = 1.35, p = .2189$. The effect of implementation level ($d = 1.41$) accounted for 33.3% of the variance in dropout rates.

The implementation of character education had a moderate effect ($d = 0.69$) on math proficiency and a large effect ($d = 0.82$) on reading proficiency. The percentage of students scoring at or above proficient in math in schools with low levels of character education ($M = 65.60, SD = 18.55$) fell 11.27 percentage points lower, on average, than in schools with high levels of programming ($M = 76.87, SD = 13.74$), $t(41) = -2.27, p = .0284$. Ten percent of the variance in math proficiency among schools was accounted for by character education implementation levels ($r^2 = .106$). Similarly, average reading proficiency rates differed by 9.24 percentage points when comparing low- and high-implementation schools ($M = 72.32, SD = 13.03$ and $M = 81.56, SD = 9.08$, respectively), $t(41) = -2.71, p = .0099$. 14.5 percent of the variance in reading proficiency among schools was accounted for by level of program implementation ($r^2 = .145$).

The 2005-2006 School Year

Table 9 displays performance outcomes differentiated by implementation level for the 2005-2006 school year.

Table 9. Performance Outcomes, by Level of Implementation, 2005-2006

Level of Implementation	Suspension Rate	Offender Rate	Attendance Rate	Promotion Rate	Drop-out Rate	Math Proficiency Rate	Reading Proficiency Rate
Low	15.0* (19)	8.0 (19)	95.2 (19)	97.1 (19)	2.0 (3)	78.3 (19)	73.0* (19)
Medium	15.5 (37)	7.6 (37)	94.5 (37)	96.0 (37)	3.7 (7)	78.4 (37)	79.0 (36)
High	7.8* (20)	4.8 (20)	95.4 (20)	96.5 (20)	1.2 (3)	76.8 (20)	78.9* (20)

* $p < .15$

As with analysis of data for the 2004-2005 school year, performance outcomes in 2005-2006 were analyzed based on the level of character education program implementation in the 2005-2006 school year. The data resulting from this analysis are displayed in Table 10.

Table 10. Estimated Effects of Implementation on Performance Outcomes, 2005-2006

Outcome Measure	Low		High		DF	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>	<i>r</i> ²
	Implementation		Implementation						
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>					
Suspension Rate	15.04	19.3	7.85	6.72	22.1	1.54	.1384	0.50	.058
Offender Rate	7.96	8.82	4.76	3.48	23.2	1.48	.1527	0.48	.054
Attendance Rate	95.16	1.14	95.43	0.57	26.1	-0.94	.3571	0.30	.022
Promotion Rate	97.11	2.85	96.47	4.46	37	0.53	.5984	0.17	.007
Dropout Rate	1.98	1.23	1.18	0.34	4	1.08	.3391	0.89	.164
Math Proficiency	78.30	14.06	76.76	13.99	37	0.34	.7328	0.11	.003
Reading Proficiency	73.01	13.11	78.94	10.92	37	-1.54	.1323	0.49	.057

Overall, the size of the effect of character education programming was smaller in 2005-2006 than in 2004-2005. Some outcome measures, in fact, were better in schools with lower levels of character education programming in 2005-2006. None of the differences between low- and high-implementation schools were statistically significant ($p < .05$) in 2005-2006.

Program Evaluations

Second Step[®] Evaluation

Background

Second Step[®] is a violence-prevention program using empathy training, impulse control and problem solving, and anger/emotion management. Students are taught skills in these areas through the use of discussion, role-play, and modeling. Although it is a stand-alone curriculum, the techniques taught by Second Step[®] are intended to be connected to the academic curriculum and reinforced by school personnel throughout the school day at “teachable moments.” The social skills taught by Second Step are also intended to be reinforced by parents and family members at home; thus, the curriculum provides ways for schools to secure buy-in from parents. Parents of students in preschool through fifth grade can follow a six-week training program, while parents of middle-schoolers can attend Family Night programs. The curriculum also provides templates for Take-Home Letters to facilitate communication between school personnel and family members about the social skills their children are learning and how to reinforce them at home.

Staff members from participating schools are trained by Second Step[®] trainers, and these school staff members, in turn, train other school personnel. The curriculum is provided for Preschool/Kindergarten, Grades 1 to 3, Grades 4 to 5, and Middle School/Junior High. If implemented with fidelity, fifty-minute lessons are presented regularly at one- or two-week intervals.

Methods

This investigation included the schools in Anne Arundel county that were using Second Step[®] in 2004-2005 or 2005-2006 funded by the Partnerships in Character Education grant. Ten schools

implemented the program in both years; three did not have Second Step[®] in 2004-2005 but did in 2005-2006; and one school implemented the program in 2004-2005 but did not the next year.

Participants

In 2004-2005, the 11 schools (10 elementary and one middle) had a total of 4,964 students; free or reduced-price meals (FARMS) were provided to 20.2% of the students, special education services to 10.3% of the students, and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) services to 2.0%. Most students were white (71.5%). African-American participants made up 19.8% of the population, Asians, 3.7%, Hispanics, 4.2% and Native Americans, 0.9% (Table 11). In 2005-2006, the 13 schools (11 elementary and two middle) enrolled a total of 5,664 students. Demographics were similar with slight increases in the proportion of African-American and Hispanic students and students receiving FARMS and LEP.

Table 11. Demographics of Anne Arundel County Second Step[®] Schools

School Year	American Indian	Asian	African American	White	Hispanic	Special Education	LEP	FARMS
2004-2005	0.9%	3.7%	19.8%	71.5%	4.2%	10.3%	2.0%	20.2%
2005-2006	0.8%	4.2%	24.4%	64.8%	5.8%	10.2%	2.7%	24.7%

Implementation

Although the Second Step[®] program is a scripted program, its implementation varies by site and school year. The project evaluator worked with Anne Arundel County Second Step[®] program managers to design an implementation assessment appropriate for the intended model of the delivery of the program in the participating schools. The implementation assessment consisted of items on school-wide training, classroom implementation, integration into the curriculum and school building, targeted interventions, parent and community involvement, and other implementation information. The implementation assessment had relatively high internal consistency in both 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 (Cronbach Coefficient Alpha = .78 and .91, respectively). The Second Step[®] Implementation Assessment can be found in Appendix A.

Twenty-eight variables were included in the analysis. The implementation index was calculated as the sum of the 28 analysis variables divided by the count of non-missing analysis variables. The implementation index had a theoretical range of 0.11 to 2.82. The actual range in 2004-2005 was 1.01 to 1.80; in 2005-2006 the actual range was 0.91 to 2.19. Schools were grouped into low, medium, and high implementation levels based on the quartile distribution of the implementation index in each school year. Descriptive statistics for the Second Step[®] implementation index are presented in Table 12. Implementation levels increased very slightly from 2004-2005 to 2005-2006.

Table 12. Second Step[®] Implementation Index

School Year	N	Mean	Std Dev	Low Range	Middle Range	High Range
2004-2005	11	1.44	0.26	1.01 – 1.18	1.18 – 1.61	1.61 – 1.80
2005-2006	11	1.51	0.33	0.91 – 1.30	1.30 – 1.67	1.67 – 2.19

The numbers of schools in each level of implementation are presented in Table 13.

Table 13. Number of Second Step[®] Schools by Level of Implementation

School Year	Low	Medium	High	Missing	Total
2004-2005	3	5	3	0	11
2005-2006	3	6	2	2	13

Table 14 shows the distribution of schools among the levels of implementation by school level.

Table 14. Number of Second Step[®] Schools by Level of Implementation, by School Level

Level of Implementation	2004-2005		2005-2006	
	Elementary	Middle	Elementary	Middle
Low	3	0	1	2
Medium	4	1	6	0
High	3	0	2	0
Missing	0	0	2	0

Results: Program Objectives

Predicted Direct Student Effects: Academic Achievement and Behavior

The Maryland Partnerships in Character Education grant proposal identified one project objective involving measures of student achievement and behavior. Project Objective 6 stated that by 2005, all participating schools will evidence an increase in student participation, pro-social behaviors, and academic success as measured by data on attendance, office referrals, suspension, and honor roll achievement. The performance of all Anne Arundel County schools participating in the grant on these measures is displayed in Table 15.

Table 15. Performance of Participating Anne Arundel County Schools on Project Objective 6

Performance Measure	Target	Actual Performance
Percentage of schools demonstrating an increase in attendance rates	100%	53.8%
Percentage of schools demonstrating a decrease in office referral rates	100%	30.0%
Percentage of schools demonstrating a decrease in suspension rates	100%	53.8%
Percentage of schools demonstrating an increase in honor roll rates	100%	100%

Attendance

Seven of 13 schools (53.8%) showed increases in attendance rates. The average change in attendance rate for all 13 Second Step[®] (Anne Arundel County) schools was 0.10 percentage points.

Referrals

Three of 10 schools with complete data (30.0%) showed decreases in referral rates. On average, referral rates in Anne Arundel County Second Step[®] schools did decrease during this period. The average decrease in referral rates for all 10 Second Step[®] (Anne Arundel County) schools was 0.04 percentage points.

Suspensions

Seven of 13 schools (53.8%) showed decreases in suspension rates. On average, suspension rates in Anne Arundel County Second Step[®] schools did decrease during this period. The average decrease in suspension rates for all 13 Second Step[®] (Anne Arundel County) schools was 0.0067 percentage points.

Honor Roll

Two of 2 schools (100%) showed increases in honor roll rates. On average, honor roll rates in Anne Arundel County Second Step[®] schools increased during this period. The average increase in suspension rates for both Second Step[®] (Anne Arundel County) schools was 0.36 percentage points.

Predicted Intermediate Student Effects: Parent and Community Involvement

In addition to the project objectives for direct student effects as indicated by student achievement and behavior, the grant proposal identified in Project Objective 7 that by the year 2005, parents and other community members will become more active participants compared to the 2002-03 baseline year in all participating schools as evidenced through volunteer activities and mentoring roles. The performance of participating Anne Arundel County schools on this objective is displayed in Table 16.

Table 16. Performance of Participating Anne Arundel County Schools on Project Objective 7

Performance Measure	Target	Actual Performance
Percentage of schools demonstrating an increase in the number of visits by parents and other adults volunteering at school	100%	20.0%
Percentage of schools demonstrating an increase in the number of visits by parents and other adults mentoring at school	100%	33.3%

Volunteers

Two of 10 schools (20.0%) showed increases in the number of visits by adult volunteers. On average, the number of visits by adult volunteers in Anne Arundel County Second Step[®] schools

decreased during this period. The average decrease in the number of visits by adult volunteers for all 10 Second Step[®] (Anne Arundel County) schools was 16 visits.

Mentors

Three of 9 schools (33.3%) showed increases in the number of visits by adult mentors. On average, the number of visits by adult mentors in Anne Arundel County Second Step[®] schools decreased during this period. The average decrease in the number of visits by adult mentors for all 9 Second Step[®] (Anne Arundel County) schools was 10 visits.

Results: Study Outcomes

The evaluation study examined the performance on selected outcome measures of student achievement and behavior for the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years.

Comparison of Performance Outcomes in Schools With Low and High Program Implementation

This evaluation used a modified comparison group design that compared performances by level of implementation within the analyzed school years (2004-2005 and 2005-2006). Academic and behavioral outcomes in low implementation schools were compared with those in high implementation schools. In effect, low implementation schools served as the baseline assessment against which high implementation programs were compared.

The 2004-2005 School Year

Performance outcomes for the 2004-2005 school year by level of implementation are presented in Table 17. In 2004-2005, schools with a high level of implementation of the Second Step[®] program demonstrated, on average, lower suspension and offender rates, slightly higher attendance and promotion rates, and a greater percentage of students scoring at or above proficiency on the Maryland School Assessments in math and reading.

Table 17. Second Step[®] Performance Outcomes, by Level of Implementation, 2004-2005

Level of Implementation	Suspension Rate	Offender Rate	Attendance Rate	Promotion Rate	Math Proficiency Rate	Reading Proficiency Rate
Low	4.8** (3)	2.7** (3)	94.9 (3)	98.7 (3)	83.0* (3)	82.9 (3)
Medium	4.4 (5)	2.8 (5)	95.2 (5)	99.4 (5)	82.0 (5)	80.7 (5)
High	1.3** (3)	0.9** (3)	95.6 (3)	98.8 (3)	85.7* (3)	84.4 (3)

* $p < .15$

** $p < .05$

An independent samples t test was employed to determine whether there were significant differences in outcomes when comparing schools with low program implementation to schools with

high program implementation. Effect size was calculated along with the amount of variance in the dependent variable accounted for by the independent variable, program implementation level. Effect sizes greater than 0.8 were considered large, while those less than 0.2 were considered small (Cohen, 1988). Data on the estimated effects of program implementation on outcome measures in the 2004-2005 school year are displayed in Table 18.

Table 18. Estimated Effects of Second Step[®] Implementation on Performance Outcomes, 2004-2005

Outcome Measure	Low		High		DF	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>	<i>r</i> ²
	Implementation		Implementation						
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>					
Suspension Rate	4.85	1.24	1.25	0.90	4	4.07	.0153	3.32	.734
Offender Rate	2.68	0.38	0.85	0.70	4	3.99	.0162	3.25	.725
Attendance Rate	94.89	0.81	95.63	0.35	4	-1.46	.2174	1.19	.260
Promotion Rate	98.69	0.82	98.77	0.33	4	-0.15	.8843	0.13	.004
Math Proficiency	83.03	2.01	85.70	0.95	4	-2.08	.1066	1.70	.419
Reading Proficiency	82.90	0.70	84.40	1.75	4	-1.38	.2406	1.13	.241

The results of the *t* test showed that the differences were statistically significant for suspension and offender rates ($p < .05$). The size of the effect of program implementation, as determined using the Cohen *d* statistic, was very large for suspension and offender rates. The implementation of the program accounted for 73.4 and 72.5 percent of the variance in suspension and offender rates, respectively. Suspension rates at schools that implemented Second Step[®] at low levels ($M = 4.85$, $SD = 1.24$) were significantly higher than at schools with high levels of program implementation ($M = 1.25$, $SD = 0.90$), $t(4) = 4.07$, $p = .0153$. These rates can be interpreted to mean that there were nearly 5 suspensions for every 100 students enrolled at low-implementation schools, whereas there were slightly more than 1 suspension for every 100 students enrolled at high-implementation schools.

Further, statistical analysis showed that there were marginally significant differences between groups for MSA math performance ($p < .15$). Math proficiency rates at schools with greater Second Step[®] involvement were higher ($M = 85.70$, $SD = 0.95$) than at schools with lower levels of program implementation ($M = 83.03$, $SD = 0.70$), $t(4) = -2.08$, $p = .1066$. Program implementation accounted for 41.9% of this variance in MSA math performance ($r^2 = .419$). While the difference between the two groups was only 2.67 percentage points, the difference was relatively unlikely to be due to chance.

It is possible that the lack of statistical significance in the other measures was due to the small number of schools involved: there were only 3 schools in each comparison group.

The 2005-2006 School Year

Performance outcomes for the 2005-2006 school year by level of implementation are presented in Table 19. In 2005-2006, schools with high program implementation had slightly lower suspension and offender rates, higher attendance and promotion rates, and a greater percentage of students scoring at or above proficiency on the Maryland School Assessments in math and reading.

Table 19. Second Step[®] Performance Outcomes, by Level of Implementation, 2005-2006

Level of Implementation	Suspension Rate	Offender Rate	Attendance Rate	Promotion Rate	Math Proficiency Rate	Reading Proficiency Rate
Low	26.3 (3)	12.3 (3)	94.2 (3)	96.8 (3)	74.4 (3)	76.4 (3)
Medium	5.3 (6)	2.7 (6)	95.3 (6)	99.5 (6)	87.2 (6)	82.8 (6)
High	4.0 (2)	2.7 (2)	95.9 (2)	99.0 (2)	87.3 (2)	88.2 (2)

As was the case for the analysis of the 2004-2005 data, an independent samples *t* test was employed to determine whether there were significant differences in outcomes when comparing schools with low program implementation to schools with high program implementation. Effect size was calculated along with the amount of variance in the dependent variable accounted for by the independent variable, program implementation level. Data on the estimated effects of program implementation on outcome measures in the 2005-2006 school year are displayed in Table 20.

Table 20. Estimated Effects of Second Step[®] Implementation on Performance Outcomes, 2005-2006

Outcome Measure	Low Implementation		High Implementation		DF	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>	<i>r</i> ²
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>					
	Suspension Rate	26.32	33.27	4.00					
Offender Rate	12.26	13.30	2.66	0.05	2	1.25	.3378	1.02	.207
Attendance Rate	94.18	1.52	95.90	0.02	2	-1.96	.1885	1.60	.390
Promotion Rate	96.79	4.25	99.02	0.17	3	-0.70	.5336	0.74	.121
Math Proficiency	74.37	18.15	87.25	4.45	3	-0.94	.4173	0.97	.192
Reading Proficiency	76.37	16.90	88.15	2.76	3	-0.93	.4212	0.97	.191

There were no significant correlations between implementation index and any of the outcome variables, nor were there any statistically significant differences in outcomes when comparing schools with low implementation to those with high implementation. While there were large effect sizes, the two groups were not found to be statistically significantly different. Again, this may be due to the small number of schools involved in the analysis.

Discussion

Second Step[®] Suspension Rates

Comparison of 2004-2005 suspension rates for the low and high implementation programs (Table 18) shows a significant difference in suspensions when comparing low to high implementation conditions. 2004-2005 suspension rates for both groups of schools were low when compared to the State rate of 14.8 in 2004-2005 (MSDE, 2005). In 2005-2006 (Table 20), while the difference appears to be even greater, it is not statistically significant, due to the much greater variance in suspension rates in

schools in the low implementation category (rates in these schools ranged from 5.0 to 64.7, while in schools with high implementation, suspension rates ranged from 3.7 to 4.3).

Findings were similar for data on the mean offender rates. In 2004-2005 (Table 18), schools with a high level of implementation of the Second Step[®] program demonstrated significantly lower suspension rates than schools with low implementation. Again, 2004-2005 offender rates in all 11 Second Step[®] schools were lower than the State rate of 8.4 in 2004-2005 (MSDE, 2005). In 2005-2006 (Table 20), while the difference appears to be even greater, it is not statistically significant, due to the much greater variance in offender rates in schools in the low implementation category (rates in these schools ranged from 2.8 to 27.5, while in schools with high implementation, offender rates ranged from 2.6 to 2.7).

Second Step[®] Attendance Rates

Attendance rates in both 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 showed improvement as implementation increased (see Tables 18 and 20). Schools with low implementation averaged 94.9 percent attendance in 2004-2005 and 94.2 in 2005-2006, while schools with high implementation had average attendance rates of 95.6 in 2004-2005 and 95.9 in 2005-2006. However, the differences are not statistically significant in either year. Average attendance rates for Second Step[®] schools in all levels of implementation were higher than the State rates of 93.6 in 2004-2005 and 93.7 in 2005-2006.

Second Step[®] Promotion Rates

In 2004-2005, the percentages of students promoted to the next grade were fairly similar among levels of implementation. Schools with low and high program implementation averaged 98.7 and 98.8 percent promotion rates, respectively (Table 18). In 2005-2006, there was a slight difference between schools with low and high levels of implementation: schools with low implementation averaged 96.8 percent promotion, while schools with high implementation averaged 99.0 percent (Table 20). None of the differences was statistically significant, however.

Second Step[®] MSA: Mean Percent Proficient

Math

In 2004-2005, schools with low program implementation had an average proficiency rate of 83.0, while schools with high implementation had an average proficiency rate of 85.7 (see Table 18). This difference was marginally statistically significant ($p = .11$). In 2005-2006, schools with low program implementation had a proficiency rate of 74.4, while those with high implementation averaged 87.3 percent proficient (see Table 20). Although this difference between the means appears great, it was not statistically significant, due to the large variance in proficiency rates among schools in the low implementation category. These rates ranged from 53.9 to 88.5 percent.

Reading

Proficiency rates on MSA reading in 2004-2005 were fairly similar among levels of implementation (see Table 18). In 2005-2006, as seen in Table 20, however, a difference of 11.8 percentage points existed between schools with low implementation (mean proficiency: 76.4) and those with high implementation (mean: 88.2). This difference, however, was not statistically significant, again due to the large variance in proficiency rates among schools with low implementation.

Second Step[®] Summary

Overall, Second Step[®] schools in 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 exhibited the highest performance outcomes of all program schools in nearly all areas. On the whole, these schools demonstrated low suspension and dropout rates; high attendance and promotion rates; and relatively high proficiency rates on State assessments in reading and math. Further examination of school performance by program implementation level reveals that some differences in outcomes between schools with low and high implementation levels do exist. Significant differences when comparing low to high implementation conditions were found for suspension and offender rates in 2004-2005, and marginally statistically significant differences for performance on MSA math in 2004-2005.

Carroll County Evaluation

Background

The Carroll County public school system developed its character education program based on values identified by a community survey in 1998. These values emphasized the necessity of reinforcing character education among school, family, and community. The program began countywide in the 1999-2000 school year in all schools.

Central to the Carroll County school system's character education goals was the importance of adults throughout the community modeling good character. Thus, the program emphasized the need for all adults in the school, family, and community to model and reinforce positive character traits. The county's character education activities focused on leadership and staff development designed to change school climate and set positive examples for students.

A steering committee met every other month to plan activities and write a monthly newsletter, which was sent to about 300 community organizations and parents. The Chamber of Commerce used excerpts in their monthly magazine. In addition, the committee produced a daily 27-second local radio spot on the trait of the month, paid for by about 10 local businesses.

Each school improvement team developed its own programs and activities based on the monthly traits and the county's character education goals, ranging from bulletin board displays and morning announcements, to curricular tie-ins using grade-appropriate reading materials that discussed relevant character traits, to community service activities such as food drives and "support our troops" boxes.

Teachers and school staff attended character education/discipline committee meetings every other month where they shared best practices, heard presentations, and participated in small-group activities. Attendees then shared program ideas and information with their principals.

Carroll County hosted four annual Character Education Institutes, which were predominantly attended by teachers and staff and featured keynote speakers and breakout sessions. The goal was to provide participants with strategies to take back to their classrooms.

All ninth graders participated in a daily, 90-minute freshman seminar for one quarter. They used the text *Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens* (Covey, 1998). The course consisted of four areas: orientation, career and education planning, study skills, and character education and service learning. Students (mostly ninth and tenth graders) identified as social “leaders” by school staff were asked to attend a “Leadership Day.” The focus was on ethics, leadership within the school, community service, and changing society. Students’ opinions about how to change their school to be more responsive to students’ needs were solicited, and they presented their ideas to their schools’ principals.

Character education program managers at the Carroll County school system identified a specific need in the northwest region of the county. They identified needs based on findings of relatively high rates of poverty, drug use by parents, and family dysfunction. They identified a lack of capacity in the community to adjust to new growth and diversity in the area. The Carroll County school system created a Parent-Community Liaison position to direct a program in three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school in this region of the county. The Parent-Community Liaison worked with staff and students from these schools to promote achievement, attendance, and parent involvement. In conjunction with the pupil personnel worker for the area, the liaison made home visits and conducted student-led conferences with parents. Other programs and activities coordinated by the liaison included:

- A mentorship program pairing eleventh and twelfth graders from the public high school with elementary and middle-school students;
- A mentorship program pairing students from a local private, group-oriented residential school for court committed young men with elementary and middle-school students;
- After-school programs in the elementary schools;
- A holiday program with members of a local senior citizen center;
- A motivational speaker for the high school students;
- Promoting kindness, peace, and understanding in schools;
- Working with parents who need assistance by connecting with agencies in the community;
- Encouraging parents to get involved with their student at home and in school; and

- Working with the Crisis Intervention Specialist to provide parent workshops designed to improve parents’ communication with the student and establish positive relationships in the family.

Methods

Since the Carroll County character education program is a district-wide model, all schools with accountability data in Carroll County were included in the analysis: 39 in 2004-2005, 40 in 2005-2006 (one new school opened in 2005-2006).³

Participants

Total enrollment in these schools in 2004-2005 was 28,766, growing to 28,888 in 2005-2006. In 2004-2005, 11.8% of the students received special education services, 9.3% received free or reduced-price meals (FARMS), and less than one percent were limited English proficient (LEP). The majority (93.7%) were White. Demographics were similar in 2005-2006, with a slight increase in FARMS, African-American, and Hispanic students (see Table 21).

Table 21. Demographics of Carroll County Schools

School Year	American Indian	Asian	African American	White	Hispanic	Special Education	LEP	FARMS
2004-2005	0.3%	1.4%	3.0%	93.7%	1.7%	11.8%	0.4%	9.3%
2005-2006	0.3%	1.4%	3.2%	93.1%	2.0%	11.3%	0%	10.2%

Implementation

According to program design, school administrators and student leaders planned character education programming appropriate to the needs of their school and community. Thus, while the Carroll County character education program was organized at the district level and implemented county-wide, its implementation varied school by school. The project evaluator worked with Carroll County character education program managers to design an implementation assessment appropriate for the specific program model. The implementation assessment consisted of items in seven sections measuring the degree to which character traits are widely known throughout the school, the school makes it a priority to foster a caring and welcoming atmosphere throughout the building, students are provided with opportunities for service-learning, the school provides opportunities for student leadership in character education programming and strategies, teachers and staff share responsibility for character education, families and community members are partners in the character building effort, and effective character education is promoted through school leadership and support of the character

³ Only the 40 Carroll County schools with accountability data were included in the analysis (resulting in the exclusion of six county schools/programs: Carroll County Career & Technology Center, Carroll County Evening High, Carroll County Home and Hospital, Flexible Student Support, PRIDE School, and Post Secondary Program).

education initiatives. The implementation assessment had relatively high internal consistency in both 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 (Cronbach Coefficient Alpha = .91 and .95, respectively). The Carroll County Implementation Assessment can be found in Appendix B.

Fifty-two variables were included in the analysis. The implementation index was calculated as the sum of the 52 analysis variables divided by the count of non-missing analysis variables. The lowest possible implementation index was 0.58 and the highest possible was 3.96. The actual range in 2004-2005 was 2.21 to 3.54; in 2005-2006 the actual range was 2.16 to 3.42. Schools were grouped into low, medium, and high implementation levels based on the quartile distribution of the implementation index in each school year. Descriptive statistics for the Carroll County implementation index are presented in Table 22. Implementation remained essentially the same in 2005-2006 as in 2004-2005. However, while 4 of 39 schools (10.3%) did not complete the implementation assessment for the 2004-2005 school year, 15 of 40 (37.5%) failed to do so for the 2005-2006 school year. It is not known to what degree these missing cases may have impacted the results of the evaluation.

Table 22. Carroll County Implementation Index

School Year	N	Mean	Std Dev	Low Range	Middle Range	High Range
2004-2005	35	2.71	0.28	2.21 – 2.48	2.48 – 2.90	2.90 – 3.54
2005-2006	25	2.74	0.34	2.16 – 2.57	2.57 – 2.80	2.80 – 3.42

Table 23 shows the distribution of schools among the levels of implementation.

Table 23. Number of Carroll County Schools by Level of Implementation

School Year	Low	Medium	High	Missing	Total
2004-2005	8	19	8	4	39
2005-2006	7	11	7	15	40

Table 24 shows the distribution of schools among the levels of implementation, by school level.

Table 24. Number of Carroll County Schools by Level of Implementation, by School Level

Level of Implementation	2004-2005					2005-2006				
	Elem	Mid	Mid/High	High	EMH	Elem	Mid	Mid/High	High	EMH
Low	4	1	0	3	0	5	1	0	1	0
Medium	9	6	1	3	0	7	1	1	2	0
High	6	1	0	1	0	2	3	0	2	0
Missing	2	1	0	0	1	8	4	0	2	1
All	21	9	1	7	1	22	9	1	7	1

Results: Program Objectives

Predicted Direct Student Effects: Academic Achievement and Behavior

The Maryland Partnerships in Character Education grant proposal identified one project objective involving measures of student achievement and behavior. Project Objective 6 stated that by 2005, all participating schools will evidence an increase in student participation, pro-social behaviors, and academic success as measured by data on attendance, office referrals, suspension, and honor roll achievement. The performance of Carroll County schools on these measures is displayed in Table 25.

Table 25. Performance of Carroll County Schools on Project Objective 6

Performance Measure	Target	Actual Performance
Percentage of schools demonstrating an increase in attendance rates	100%	78.9%
Percentage of schools demonstrating a decrease in office referral rates	100%	42.1%
Percentage of schools demonstrating a decrease in suspension rates	100%	33.3%
Percentage of schools demonstrating an increase in honor roll rates	100%	100%

Attendance

Thirty of 38 schools (78.9%) showed increases in attendance rates. The average change in attendance rate for all 38 Lickona (Carroll County) schools was 0.38 percentage points.

Referrals

Sixteen of 38 schools (42.1%) showed decreases in referral rates. On average, referral rates in Carroll County schools did decrease during this period. The average decrease in referral rates for all 38 Carroll County schools was 0.15 percentage points.

Suspensions

Thirteen of 39 schools with complete data (33.3%) showed decreases in suspension rates. On average, suspension rates in Carroll County schools increased during this period. The average increase in suspension rates for all 39 Carroll County schools was 0.03 percentage points.

Honor Roll

Seven of 7 schools (100%) showed increases in honor roll rates. On average, honor roll rates in Carroll County schools increased during this period. The average increase in honor roll rates for all 7 Carroll County schools was 0.56 percentage points.

Predicted Intermediate Student Effects: Parent and Community Involvement

In addition to the project objectives for direct student effects as indicated by student achievement and behavior, the grant proposal identified in Project Objective 7 that by the year 2005, parents and other community members will become more active participants compared to the 2002-03

baseline year in all participating schools as evidenced through volunteer activities and mentoring roles. The performance of Carroll County schools on this objective is displayed in Table 26.

Table 26. Performance of Carroll County Schools on Project Objective 7

Performance Measure	Target	Actual Performance
Percentage of schools demonstrating an increase in the number of visits by parents and other adults volunteering at school	100%	89.2%
Percentage of schools demonstrating an increase in the number of visits by parents and other adults mentoring at school	100%	18.4%

Volunteers

Thirty-three of 37 schools (89.2%) showed increases in the number of visits by adult volunteers. On average, the number of visits by adult volunteers in Carroll County schools increased during this period. The average increase in the number of visits by adult volunteers for all 37 Carroll County schools was 133 visits.

Mentors

Seven of 38 schools (18.4%) showed increases in the number of visits by adult mentors. On average, the number of visits by adult mentors in Carroll County schools increased slightly during this period. The average increase in the number of visits by adult mentors for all 38 Carroll County schools was 1 visit.

Results: Study Outcomes

The evaluation study examined the performance on selected outcome measures of student achievement and behavior for the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years.

Comparison of Performance Outcomes in Schools With Low and High Program Implementation

This evaluation used a modified comparison group design that compared performances by level of implementation within the analyzed school years (2004-2005 and 2005-2006). Academic and behavioral outcomes in low implementation schools were compared with those in high implementation schools. In effect, low implementation schools served as the baseline assessment against which high implementation programs were compared.

The 2004-2005 School Year

Performance outcomes for the 2004-2005 school year by level of implementation are presented in Table 27. In 2004-2005, schools with a high level of implementation of the Carroll County character education initiative demonstrated, on average, lower suspension and offender rates, slightly higher attendance and promotion rates, lower dropout rates, and a greater percentage of students scoring at or above proficiency on the Maryland School Assessments in math and reading.

Table 27. Carroll County Performance Outcomes, by Level of Implementation, 2004-2005

Level of Implementation	Suspension Rate	Offender Rate	Attendance Rate	Promotion Rate	Drop-out Rate	Math Proficiency Rate	Reading Proficiency Rate
Low	6.2 (8)	3.8* (8)	95.2 (8)	97.6 (8)	1.26 (3)	77.3 (8)	82.2 (8)
Medium	17.5 (19)	7.6 (19)	94.8 (19)	98.3 (19)	3.62 (4)	73.5 (19)	79.4 (19)
High	3.0 (8)	1.9* (8)	95.6 (8)	98.6 (8)	0.63 (1)	81.7 (8)	85.0 (8)

* $p < .15$

An independent samples t test was employed to determine whether there were significant differences in outcomes when comparing schools with low program implementation to schools with high program implementation. Effect size (d) was calculated along with the amount of variance in the dependent variable accounted for by the independent variable, program implementation level. Effect sizes greater than 0.8 were considered large, while those less than 0.2 were considered small (Cohen, 1988). Data on the estimated effects of program implementation on outcome measures in the 2004-2005 school year are displayed in Table 28.

Table 28. Estimated Effects of Carroll County Implementation on Performance Outcomes, 2004-2005

Outcome Measure	Low Implementation		High Implementation		DF	t	p	Cohen's d	r^2
	M	SD	M	SD					
Suspension Rate	6.16	5.42	3.00	2.37	9.58	1.51	.1630	0.76	.125
Offender Rate	3.82	3.17	1.86	1.20	8.97	1.63	.1370	0.82	.143
Attendance Rate	95.20	0.65	95.58	0.32	14	-1.47	.1646	0.74	.121
Promotion Rate	97.61	2.20	98.63	2.03	14	-0.96	.3529	0.48	.055
Dropout Rate	1.26	0.43	0.63	--	--	--	--	--	--
Math Proficiency	77.31	11.10	81.71	10.54	14	-0.81	.4298	0.41	.040
Reading Proficiency	82.15	7.85	85.03	4.98	14	-0.87	.3965	0.44	.046

Statistical analysis showed that while the comparison groups differed as would be expected according to program design, the differences were not statistically significant. Suspension rates at schools that implemented character education programming at low levels ($M = 6.16$, $SD = 5.42$) were higher, but not significantly so, than at schools with high levels of program implementation ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 2.37$), $t(9.58) = 1.51$, $p = .1630$. In other words, while on average the high-implementation schools had 3 suspensions for every 100 enrolled students and the low-implementation schools had twice as many, 6 suspensions for every 100 enrolled students, there was such overlap in the distribution of suspension rates across both categories that no real difference can be concluded. It is possible that the significance was limited due to the small sample size (8 schools in each group).

Results for offender rates were similar, as would be expected. While schools that implemented programming more fully had fewer students suspended ($M = 1.86$, $SD = 1.20$) than schools that did not

implement character education as much ($M = 3.82, SD = 3.17$), it cannot be concluded that there was a real difference between the two groups ($t(8.97) = 1.63, p = .1370$). The difference between the two groups of schools was only marginally significant ($p < .15$).

Attendance rates in the high-implementation schools were, on average, higher ($M = 95.58, SD = 0.32$) than in the low-implementation schools ($M = 95.20, SD = 0.65$), but again the difference was not statistically significant ($t(14) = -1.47, p = .1646$). Similarly, the mean promotion rate in the schools with higher levels of character education programming was higher ($M = 98.63, SD = 2.03$) was higher than in schools with lower levels ($M = 97.61, SD = 2.20$), but the difference was not statistically significant ($t(14) = -0.96, p = .3529$).

There was only 1 high school in the high-implementation category, so differences in dropout rates cannot be statistically assessed. The dropout rate for this school was 0.63%, while the average dropout rate for the 3 high schools in the low-implementation category was 1.26%.

There were no statistically significant differences between groups for MSA math performance, but differences did exist that were aligned with expectations. Math proficiency rates at schools with greater character education involvement were higher ($M = 81.71, SD = 10.54$) than at schools with lower levels of program implementation ($M = 77.31, SD = 11.10$), but, due to the high degree of overlap between the two groups, the difference was not statistically significant, $t(14) = -0.81, p = .4298$.

Similarly, reading proficiency rates at high-implementation schools were higher ($M = 85.03, SD = 4.98$) than at schools with lower levels of program implementation ($M = 82.15, SD = 7.85$), but the difference was not statistically significant, $t(14) = -0.87, p = .3965$.

The 2005-2006 School Year

Performance outcomes for the 2005-2006 school year by level of implementation are presented in Table 29. In 2005-2006, performance outcomes were not in the expected direction. Schools with high program implementation had a higher average suspension and offender rate, slightly lower average attendance and promotion rates, slightly higher average dropout rate, and lower average math proficiency rate. High implementation schools did have a slightly higher average reading proficiency rate.

Table 29. Carroll County Performance Outcomes, by Level of Implementation, 2005-2006

Level of Implementation	Suspension Rate	Offender Rate	Attendance Rate	Promotion Rate	Drop-out Rate	Math Proficiency Rate	Reading Proficiency Rate
Low	4.1 (7)	2.8 (7)	96.0 (7)	96.1 (7)	0.57 (1)	85.3 (7)	78.1 (7)
Medium	25.0 (11)	10.0 (11)	94.5 (11)	92.3 (11)	4.62 (3)	84.8 (11)	84.5 (10)
High	8.5 (7)	5.2 (7)	95.6 (7)	95.4 (7)	1.04 (2)	77.7 (7)	79.7 (7)

As was the case for the analysis of the 2004-2005 data, an independent samples *t* test was employed to determine whether there were significant differences in outcomes when comparing schools with low program implementation to schools with high program implementation. Effect size was calculated along with the amount of variance in the dependent variable accounted for by the independent variable, program implementation level. Data on the estimated effects of program implementation on outcome measures in the 2005-2006 school year are displayed in Table 30.

Table 30. Estimated Effects of Carroll County Implementation on Performance Outcomes, 2005-2006

Outcome Measure	Low Implementation		High Implementation		DF	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>	<i>r</i> ²
	M	SD	M	SD					
Suspension Rate	4.13	3.61	8.50	6.25	12	-1.60	.1348	0.86	.155
Offender Rate	2.81	2.30	5.17	3.26	12	-1.56	.1437	0.84	.149
Attendance Rate	96.02	0.25	95.57	0.52	12	2.02	.0657	1.10	.233
Promotion Rate	96.10	2.62	95.42	2.46	12	0.50	.6260	0.27	.018
Dropout Rate	0.57	--	1.04	0.33	--	--	--	--	--
Math Proficiency	85.33	4.64	77.69	11.57	7.88	1.62	.1441	0.87	.158
Reading Proficiency	78.11	11.41	79.67	7.87	12	-0.30	.7713	0.16	.006

In 2004-2005, schools with high program implementation exhibited more desirable program outcomes than schools with low implementation. This was not evident in 2005-2006, however. There were no significant correlations between implementation index and any of the outcome variables in either year, nor were there any statistically significant differences in outcomes when comparing schools with low implementation to those with high implementation.

Discussion

Carroll County Suspension Rates

In 2004-2005, analysis of suspension rates (Table 28) reveals a slight difference between schools with low program implementation and schools with high implementation. This difference is not statistically significant, however. In 2005-2006, the average suspension rate in schools with high implementation was actually higher than in schools with low implementation (Table 30). Suspension

rates for both groups of schools were very low when compared to the State rate of 14.8 in 2004-2005 (MSDE, 2005) and 15.2 in 2005-2006 (MSDE, 2006).

Findings were similar for data on the mean offender rates (Tables 28 and 30). Data for 2004-2005 show a slight, marginally significant difference ($p < .15$) in mean offender rate between the low and the high implementation conditions, but for 2005-2006, schools with a high degree of character education programming actually experienced higher offender rates than schools with low implementation. Again, offender rates in Carroll County schools were lower than the State rate of 8.4 in 2004-2005 (MSDE, 2005) and 8.7 in 2005-2006 (MSDE, 2006).

Carroll County Attendance Rates

Comparison of suspension rates for the low and high implementation programs (Tables 28 and 30) shows no significant difference in attendance rates when comparing low to high implementation conditions. Attendance rates for both groups of schools were higher than the State rate of 93.6 in 2004-2005 and 93.7 in 2005-2006.

Carroll County Promotion Rates

Consistent with findings for attendance and suspensions, analysis reveals no statistically significant relationship between levels of program implementation and mean promotion rates (Tables 28 and 30).

Carroll County Dropout Rates

Analysis shows no statistically significant correlation between levels of program implementation and dropout rates (Tables 28 and 30). In 2004-2005, dropout rates in the three high schools with low program implementation averaged 1.26 while the dropout rate in the one high school with high implementation was 0.63. While the school with high implementation did have a lower dropout rate, no conclusion can be drawn about the impact of program implementation due to the small number of schools involved. In 2005-2006, the one high school with low program implementation had a dropout rate of 0.57, while the two schools with high implementation had a higher average dropout rate of 1.04. These rates were lower than the state dropout rates of 3.68 in 2004-2005 (MSDE, 2005) and 3.63 in 2005-2006 (MSDE, 2006).

Carroll County MSA: Mean Percent Proficient

Math

Maryland School Assessment math performances are not correlated with program implementation levels. In 2004-2005, schools with low program implementation had a proficiency rate of 77.3, while schools with high implementation had a proficiency rate of 85.0 (see Table 28). While the difference is in the direction that might imply program effectiveness, the difference is not statistically significant. In 2005-2006, schools with low program implementation had a proficiency rate of 85.3, while those with high implementation averaged 77.7 percent proficient (see Table 30).

Reading

Similarly, Maryland School Assessment reading performances are not correlated with program implementation levels. In 2004-2005, schools with low program implementation had a proficiency rate of 82.2, while schools with high implementation had a proficiency rate of 81.7 (Table 28). In 2005-2006, schools with low program implementation had a proficiency rate of 78.1, while those with high implementation averaged 79.7 percent proficient (Table 30). While the difference in 2005-2006 is in the direction that might imply program effectiveness, the difference is not statistically significant.

Carroll County Summary

Overall, Carroll County schools in 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 demonstrated low suspension and dropout rates; high attendance and promotion rates; and relatively high proficiency rates on State assessments in reading and math. Small non-statistically significant differences did exist between schools according to program implementation levels in 2004-2005. In 2005-2006, unexpectedly, schools with higher implementation had less desirable outcomes.

Analysis of the Northwest Region of Carroll County

Five schools in the northwest region of Carroll County were selected for a separate analysis due to their involvement in unique activities funded by the Partnerships in Character Education grant.

In both 2004-2005 and 2005-2006, the five schools in the Northwest region did evidence slightly lower suspension, offender, and dropout rates (see Tables 31 and 32). These differences were not statistically significant, however. The number of schools in the Northwest region (n = 5) was so small that differences are difficult to detect statistically.

Table 31. Performance Outcomes, by Carroll County Region, 2004-2005

Region	Suspension Rate	Offender Rate	Attendance Rate	Promotion Rate	Drop-out Rate	Math Proficiency Rate	Reading Proficiency Rate
Northwest	8.0 (5)	4.7 (5)	95.0 (5)	97.4 (5)	1.75 (1)	71.4 (5)	75.7 (5)
Not Northwest	11.4 (34)	5.3 (34)	95.1 (34)	97.9 (34)	2.14 (8)	76.0 (34)	81.5 (34)

Table 32. Performance Outcomes, by Carroll County Region, 2005-2006

Region	Suspension Rate	Offender Rate	Attendance Rate	Promotion Rate	Drop-out Rate	Math Proficiency Rate	Reading Proficiency Rate
Northwest	9.8 (5)	5.3 (5)	95.4 (5)	94.4 (5)	1.28 (1)	77.4 (5)	77.1 (5)
Not Northwest	12.1 (35)	5.8 (35)	95.4 (34)	95.2 (34)	2.50 (7)	81.3 (34)	80.3 (33)

An analysis was conducted to examine whether correlations existed between implementation index and outcomes, in either region. This analysis did not find any significant differences in 2004-2005 or 2005-2006. However, as noted above, the number of schools in the Northwest region (n = 5) and the number of schools in this region in each level of implementation were so small that differences are difficult to detect statistically. Data are presented in Tables 33 and 34.

Table 33. Performance Outcomes, by Carroll County Region and Level of Implementation, 2004-2005

Region	Level of Implementation	Suspension Rate	Offender Rate	Attendance Rate	Promotion Rate	Dropout Rate	Math Proficiency Rate	Reading Proficiency Rate
Northwest	Low	9.1 (2)	5.5 (2)	94.6 (2)	96.2 (2)	1.75 (1)	71.0 (2)	73.9 (2)
	Medium	3.3 (2)	2.0 (2)	95.4 (2)	98.2 (2)	N/A	80.0 (2)	77.0 (2)
	High	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Not Northwest	Low	5.2 (6)	3.3 (6)	95.4 (6)	98.1 (6)	1.02 (2)	79.4 (6)	84.9 (6)
	Medium	19.2 (17)	8.3 (17)	94.8 (17)	98.4 (17)	3.62 (4)	72.8 (17)	79.7 (17)
	High	3.0 (8)	1.9 (8)	95.6 (8)	98.6 (8)	0.63 (1)	81.7 (8)	85.0 (8)

Table 34. Performance Outcomes, by Carroll County Region and Level of Implementation, 2005-2006

Region	Level of Implementation	Suspension Rate	Offender Rate	Attendance Rate	Promotion Rate	Dropout Rate	Math Proficiency Rate	Reading Proficiency Rate
Northwest	Low	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Medium	3.7 (1)	1.9 (1)	95.6 (1)	96.9 (1)	N/A	86.8 (1)	81.1 (1)
	High	11.7 (2)	6.0 (2)	95.3 (2)	93.5 (2)	N/A	66.7 (2)	74.6 (2)
Not Northwest	Low	4.1 (7)	2.8 (7)	96.0 (7)	96.1 (7)	0.57 (1)	85.3 (7)	78.1 (7)
	Medium	27.1 (10)	10.8 (10)	94.4 (10)	91.9 (10)	4.62 (3)	84.6 (10)	84.9 (9)
	High	7.2 (5)	4.8 (5)	95.7 (5)	96.2 (5)	1.04 (2)	82.1 (5)	81.7 (5)

Character Counts! Mid-Shore Evaluation

Background

Character Counts! Mid-Shore is a non-profit organization headquartered in Easton, Maryland, in Talbot County on the state's eastern shore. This organization is based on the Josephson Institute's Character Counts! model, but goes further to incorporate other program components designed or adapted by the Mid-Shore organization. The Character Counts! program, begun in 1993 by the Josephson Institute of Ethics, is not limited to implementation in schools but rather is a community-wide program whose purpose was to increase ethical behavior among children. The Character Counts! coalition holds that certain values are universal and transcend political and social differences. These values are the "Six Pillars of Character": Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship. The model is based on the importance of adults teaching and modeling ethical behavior for children (Josephson Institute of Ethics, 2007).

The Character Counts! Mid-Shore program provided several school-based initiatives in Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot Counties. The in-school activities addressed students of different age groups. The "Winners Walk Tall" program for elementary and middle schools trained community volunteers to serve as "Character Coaches" in weekly classroom presentations. In these presentations, volunteers shared personal experiences and led classes in activities to operationalize the program's six character ideals. Classroom teachers reinforced the messages of these presentations by infusing them into the curriculum. The "Take Five for Character" sports ethics program trained volunteer coaches in youth sports leagues to facilitate team discussion of ethical situations that arise in a variety of sports. The "Laws of Life" essay contest, based on the essay contest designed by the Templeton Foundation, offered students in middle and high schools the opportunity to think about character traits that were important to them. Winners were chosen by Mid-Shore leadership and a winner from each school received a cash prize. In addition, schools developed their own ways of publicizing the principles of character (e.g., bulletin board displays, daily public announcements, or recognition of students who demonstrate good character). School administration and staff supported the program.

Methods

All schools in the five school systems on Maryland's middle eastern shore (Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot County Public Schools) participated in the Partnerships in Character Education grant, with a non-profit community organization, Character Counts! Mid-Shore, as a grant partner. The number of participating schools totaled 49 schools each year, with 9 in Caroline County, 11 in Dorchester, 8 in Kent, 13 in Queen Anne's, and 8 in Talbot.⁴

⁴ Only the 49 schools in these five school systems with accountability data were included in the analysis (resulting in the exclusion of three schools/programs: the Career and Technology Center in Caroline County, and, in Dorchester County, the Judy Center and School of Technology).

Participants

Total enrollment in these schools in 2004-2005 was 24,932 and 24,926 in 2005-2006. In 2004-2005, 12.0% of the students received special education services, 32.6% received free or reduced-price meals (FARMS), and 1.8% were limited English proficient (LEP). 74.4% were White, 21.3% African-American, 2.7% Hispanic, 1.2% Asian, and 0.3% American Indian. Demographics were similar in 2005-2006, with a slight increase in LEP and Hispanic students (see Table 35).

Table 35. Demographics of Character Counts! Mid-Shore Schools

School Year	American Indian	Asian	African American	White	Hispanic	Special Education	LEP	FARMS
2004-2005	0.3%	1.2%	21.3%	74.4%	2.7%	12.0%	1.8%	32.6%
2005-2006	0.4%	1.2%	21.0%	74.3%	3.2%	11.5%	2.2%	33.0%

Detailed demographic data by local school system are presented in Table 36.

Table 36. Demographics of Character Counts! Mid-Shore Schools by Local School System

School Year	Local School System	American Indian	Asian	African American	White	Hispanic	Special Education	LEP	FARMS
2004-2005	Caroline	0.4	1.0	19.0	76.1	3.6	11.9	1.5	45.1
	Dorchester	0.3	1.4	41.1	54.9	2.3	10.5	1.8	47.9
	Kent	0.3	0.6	26.4	69.0	3.7	13.7	2.5	39.4
	Queen Anne's	0.4	1.0	9.1	88.2	1.3	13.7	1.0	15.4
	Talbot	0.3	1.9	21.3	72.7	3.8	9.9	3.0	28.2
2005-2006	Caroline	0.4	0.8	19.4	75.7	3.6	11.7	1.9	43.6
	Dorchester	0.2	1.4	40.3	55.5	2.6	9.1	2.5	48.9
	Kent	0.3	0.6	26.6	67.9	4.5	13.7	3.0	41.8
	Queen Anne's	0.4	1.0	8.7	88.2	1.6	12.9	1.3	15.9
	Talbot	0.3	2.0	21.1	71.6	5.0	9.8	3.5	28.2

Implementation

A Character Counts! Mid-Shore county coordinator in each of the five local school systems worked in partnership with school-based personnel to deliver character education programming. Thus, while the Character Counts! program was organized at the Easton headquarters and implemented across all five counties, its implementation varied district by district and school by school. The project evaluator worked with Character Counts! Mid-Shore program managers to design an implementation assessment appropriate for the character education model. The implementation assessment consisted of items on incorporation of the “6 Pillars,” “Winners Walk Tall,” and “Laws of Life” essay contest, items

measuring the degree of involvement of business partners, items measuring the degree of reliance on Character Counts! for the school’s character education programs, and the use of methods to publicize Character Counts! in the community around the school. The implementation assessment had relatively high internal consistency in 2004-2005 (Cronbach Coefficient Alpha = .89), but not as high in 2005-2006 (Cronbach Coefficient Alpha = .67). The Character Counts! Implementation Assessment can be found in Appendix C.

Fifty-six variables were included in the analysis. The implementation index was calculated as the sum of the 56 analysis variables divided by the count of non-missing analysis variables. The lowest possible implementation index was 0.18 and the highest possible was 5.00. The actual range in 2004-2005 was 1.28 to 3.72; in 2005-2006 the actual range was 1.35 to 3.27. Schools were grouped into low, medium, and high implementation levels based on the quartile distribution of the implementation index in each school year. Descriptive statistics for the Character Counts! implementation index are presented in Table 37. Implementation decreased slightly from 2004-2005 to 2005-2006.

Table 37. Character Counts! Mid-Shore Implementation Index

School Year	N	Mean	Std Dev	Low Range	Middle Range	High Range
2004-2005	44	2.70	0.62	1.28 – 2.15	2.15 – 3.19	3.19 – 3.72
2005-2006	40	2.22	0.47	1.35 – 1.76	1.76 – 2.46	2.46 – 3.27

Table 38 shows the distribution of schools among the levels of implementation.

Table 38. Number of Character Counts! Mid-Shore Schools by Level of Implementation

School Year	Low	Medium	High	Missing	Total
2004-2005	12	21	11	5	49
2005-2006	10	20	10	9	49

Table 39. Number of Character Counts! Mid-Shore Schools by Local School System and Level of Implementation

Local School System	2004-2005				2005-2006				Total
	Low	Medium	High	Missing	Low	Medium	High	Missing	
Caroline	8	1	0	0	7	2	0	0	9
Dorchester	3	6	2	0	0	9	2	0	11
Kent	1	3	0	4	3	1	0	4	8
Queen Anne’s	0	5	7	1	0	7	1	5	13
Talbot	0	6	2	0	0	1	7	0	8

Table 40. Number of Character Counts! Mid-Shore Schools by Level of Implementation, by School Level

Level of Implementation	2004-2005					2005-2006				
	Elem	Elem/Mid	Mid	Mid/High	High	Elem	Elem/Mid	Mid	Mid/High	High
Low	2	1	3	0	4	5	1	1	0	2
Medium	15	2	3	1	2	10	2	5	1	2
High	9	0	1	0	1	9	0	1	0	1
Missing	1	2	1	0	1	3	2	1	0	3
All	27	5	8	1	8	27	5	8	1	8

Results: Program Objectives

Predicted Direct Student Effects: Academic Achievement and Behavior

The Maryland Partnerships in Character Education grant proposal identified one project objective involving measures of student achievement and behavior. Project Objective 6 stated that by 2005, all participating schools will evidence an increase in student participation, pro-social behaviors, and academic success as measured by data on attendance, office referrals, suspension, and honor roll achievement. The performance of mid-shore schools on these measures is displayed in Table 41.

Table 41. Performance of Character Counts! Mid-Shore Schools on Project Objective 6

Performance Measure	Target	Actual Performance
Percentage of schools demonstrating an increase in attendance rates	100%	62.5%
Caroline County		100%
Dorchester County		72.7%
Kent County		12.5%
Queen Anne’s County		58.3%
Talbot County		62.5%
Percentage of schools demonstrating a decrease in office referral rates	100%	59.0%
Caroline County		66.7%
Dorchester County		45.5%
Kent County		60.0%
Queen Anne’s County		83.3%
Talbot County		50.0%
Percentage of schools demonstrating a decrease in suspension rates	100%	47.9%
Caroline County		33.3%
Dorchester County		54.5%
Kent County		25.0%
Queen Anne’s County		66.7%
Talbot County		50.0%
Percentage of schools demonstrating an increase in honor roll rates	100%	61.5%
Caroline County		No data
Dorchester County		0%
Kent County		83.3%
Queen Anne’s County		No data
Talbot County		100%

Attendance

Thirty of 48 schools (62.5%) showed increases in attendance rates. The average change in attendance rate for all 48 Character Counts Mid-Shore schools was 0.07 percentage points.

Referrals

Twenty-three of 39 schools with complete data (59.0%) showed decreases in referral rates. On average, referral rates in Character Counts! schools increased during this period. The average increase in referral rates for all 39 Character Counts! schools was 0.01 percentage points.

Suspensions

Twenty-three of 48 schools with complete data (47.9%) showed decreases in suspension rates. On average, suspension rates in Character Counts! schools decreased slightly during this period. The average decrease in suspension rates for all 48 Character Counts! schools was 0.004 percentage points.

Honor Roll

Eight of 13 schools (61.5%) showed increases in honor roll rates. On average, honor roll rates in Character Counts! schools increased slightly during this period. The average increase in honor roll rates for all 13 Character Counts! schools was 0.05 percentage points.

Predicted Intermediate Student Effects: Parent and Community Involvement

In addition to the project objectives for direct student effects as indicated by student achievement and behavior, the grant proposal identified in Project Objective 7 that by the year 2005, parents and other community members will become more active participants compared to the 2002-03 baseline year in all participating schools as evidenced through volunteer activities and mentoring roles. The performance of Character Counts! Mid-Shore schools on this objective is displayed in Table 42.

Table 42. Performance of Character Counts! Mid-Shore Schools on Project Objective 7

Performance Measure	Target	Actual Performance
Percentage of schools demonstrating an increase in the number of visits by parents and other adults volunteering at school	100%	76.0%
Caroline County		No data
Dorchester County		42.9%
Kent County		80.0%
Queen Anne’s County		100%
Talbot County		87.5%
Percentage of schools demonstrating an increase in the number of visits by parents and other adults mentoring at school	100%	26.7%
Caroline County		0%
Dorchester County		14.3%
Kent County		33.3%
Queen Anne’s County		No data
Talbot County		62.5%

Volunteers

Nineteen of 25 schools (76.0%) with complete data showed increases in the number of visits by adult volunteers. On average, the number of visits by adult volunteers in Character Counts! schools increased during this period. The average increase in the number of visits by adult volunteers for all 25 Character Counts! schools was 304 visits.

Mentors

Eight of 30 schools (26.7%) with complete data showed increases in the number of visits by adult mentors. On average, the number of visits by adult mentors in Character Counts! schools increased during this period. The average increase in the number of visits by adult mentors for all 30 Character Counts! schools was 8 visits.

Results: Study Outcomes

The evaluation study examined the performance on selected outcome measures of student achievement and behavior for the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years.

Comparison of Performance Outcomes in Schools With Low and High Program Implementation

This evaluation used a modified comparison group design that compared performances by level of implementation within the analyzed school years (2004-2005 and 2005-2006). Academic and behavioral outcomes in low implementation schools were compared with those in high implementation schools. In effect, low implementation schools served as the baseline assessment against which high implementation programs were compared.

The 2004-2005 School Year

Performance outcomes for the 2004-2005 school year by level of implementation are presented in Table 43. Schools with high levels of character education programming had lower suspension and offender rates, higher attendance and promotion rates, lower dropout rates, and higher math and reading proficiency rates.

Table 43. Character Counts! Mid-Shore Performance Outcomes, by Level of Implementation, 2004-2005

Level of Implementation	Suspension Rate	Offender Rate	Attendance Rate	Promotion Rate	Drop-out Rate	Math Proficiency Rate	Reading Proficiency Rate
Low	36.1** (10)	17.2** (10)	93.1* (10)	95.6 (10)	4.17 (4)	51.0* (10)	61.3* (10)
Medium	10.2 (23)	5.8 (23)	94.1 (23)	96.5 (23)	2.77 (3)	70.9 (23)	75.3 (23)
High	4.2** (11)	3.0** (11)	94.8* (11)	96.7 (11)	0.93 (1)	70.9* (11)	78.3* (11)

* $p < .01$

** $p < .001$

An independent samples t test was employed to determine whether there were significant differences in outcomes when comparing schools with low program implementation to schools with high program implementation. Effect size was calculated along with the amount of variance in the dependent variable accounted for by the independent variable, program implementation level. Effect sizes greater than 0.8 were considered large, while those less than 0.2 were considered small (Cohen, 1988). Data on the estimated effects of program implementation on outcome measures in the 2004-2005 school year are displayed in Table 44.

Table 44. Estimated Effects of Character Counts! Mid-Shore Implementation on Performance Outcomes, 2004-2005

Outcome Measure	Low Implementation		High Implementation		DF	t	p	Cohen's d	r^2
	M	SD	M	SD					
Suspension Rate	36.07	20.65	4.23	4.11	9.65	4.79	.0008	2.14	.533
Offender Rate	17.20	8.89	3.00	2.88	10.7	4.83	.0006	2.15	.536
Attendance Rate	93.06	1.47	94.79	0.59	11.6	-3.47	.0048	1.54	.374
Promotion Rate	95.64	6.14	96.68	7.38	19	-0.35	.7306	0.15	.006
Dropout Rate	4.17	2.04	0.93	--	--	--	--	--	--
Math Proficiency	50.99	14.42	70.94	15.42	19	-3.05	.0065	1.14	.309
Reading Proficiency	61.29	8.43	78.26	11.44	19	-3.83	.0011	1.69	.416

Statistical analysis revealed that the differences between comparison groups were statistically significant with large effect sizes for suspension and offender rates, attendance rates, and math and reading proficiency rates. Suspension rates in schools with high levels of Character Counts! Mid-Shore involvement were significantly lower ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 4.11$) than in schools with low levels of

programming ($M = 36.07$, $SD = 20.65$), $t(9.65) = 4.79$, $p = .0008$. The size of the effect of implementation was very large ($d = 2.14$). The level of program implementation accounted for 53.3% of the variance in suspension rates ($r^2 = .533$). Data for offender rates were similar. The average number of students suspended in schools with high program implementation ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 2.88$) was one-fifth that of schools with little Character Counts! Mid-Shore involvement ($M = 17.20$, $SD = 8.89$), $t(10.7) = 4.83$, $p = .0006$. In other words, only 3 of every 100 enrolled students in the high-implementation schools were suspended in the 2004-2005 school year, while more than 17 of every 100 enrolled students in the low-implementation schools were suspended.

Analysis of data on attendance rates revealed similar findings. Attendance rates in schools with greater Character Counts! Mid-Shore involvement were significantly higher ($M = 94.79$, $SD = 0.59$) than in the low-implementation schools ($M = 93.06$, $SD = 1.47$), $t(11.6) = -3.47$, $p = .0048$. While the difference is only 1.73 percentage points, the size of the effect of program implementation was large ($d = 1.54$, $r^2 = .374$).

Differences between the comparison groups were not significant in terms of promotion rates. While high-implementation schools did have average promotion rates ($M = 96.68$, $SD = 7.38$) about a full percentage point higher than the low-implementation schools ($M = 95.64$, $SD = 6.14$), the difference was not statistically significant, $t(19) = -0.35$, $p = .7306$.

There was only one high school in the high implementation category, so group differences in dropout rates were not able to be assessed statistically. This single high school had a dropout rate of 0.93, while the 4 high schools in the low implementation category averaged 4.17.

Math and reading proficiency rates also differed significantly between the comparison groups. Schools with low levels of Character Counts! Mid-Shore programming performed significantly worse on MSA in math ($M = 50.99$, $SD = 14.42$) and reading ($M = 61.29$, $SD = 8.43$) than high-implementation schools ($M = 70.94$, $SD = 15.42$, $t(19) = -3.05$, $p = .0065$ and $M = 78.26$, $SD = 11.44$, $t(19) = -3.83$, $p = .0011$, respectively). Character Counts! Mid-Shore implementation effect size was large for both math and reading ($d = 1.14$ and 1.69 , respectively). Implementation accounted for 30.9% of the variance in math scores and 41.6% of the variance in reading proficiency rates.

The 2005-2006 School Year

Performance outcomes for the 2005-2006 school year by level of implementation are presented in Table 45. In 2005-2006, performance outcomes continued to be in the expected direction, except for promotion rates.

Table 45. Character Counts! Mid-Shore Performance Outcomes, by Level of Implementation, 2005-2006

Level of Implementation	Suspension Rate	Offender Rate	Attendance Rate	Promotion Rate	Drop-out Rate	Math Proficiency Rate	Reading Proficiency Rate
Low	19.8* (9)	10.5* (9)	94.8 (9)	98.0 (9)	2.69 (2)	74.1 (9)	67.9* (9)
Medium	13.4 (20)	7.7 (20)	94.2 (20)	97.0 (20)	2.93 (4)	72.2 (20)	75.1 (20)
High	8.1* (11)	4.9* (11)	95.3 (11)	96.7 (11)	1.47 (1)	74.3 (11)	76.8* (11)

* $p < .15$.

As was the case for the analysis of the 2004-2005 data, an independent samples t test was employed to determine whether there were significant differences in outcomes when comparing schools with low program implementation to schools with high program implementation. Effect size was calculated along with the amount of variance in the dependent variable accounted for by the independent variable, program implementation level. Data on the estimated effects of program implementation on outcome measures in the 2005-2006 school year are displayed in Table 46.

Table 46. Estimated Effects of Character Counts! Mid-Shore Implementation on Performance Outcomes, 2005-2006

Outcome Measure	Low Implementation		High Implementation		DF	t	p	Cohen's d	r^2
	M	SD	M	SD					
Suspension Rate	19.76	19.35	8.13	7.68	10.1	1.70	.1204	0.79	.135
Offender Rate	10.54	9.44	4.88	3.96	10.3	1.68	.1226	0.78	.133
Attendance Rate	94.82	1.07	95.25	0.59	18	-1.16	.2630	0.50	.058
Promotion Rate	97.99	2.61	96.66	5.66	14.6	0.69	.4998	0.30	.022
Dropout Rate	2.69	0.20	1.47	--	--	--	--	--	--
Math Proficiency	74.14	16.66	74.26	16.12	18	-0.01	.9882	0.01	.000
Reading Proficiency	67.91	12.72	76.80	12.90	18	-1.54	.1403	0.69	.107

There were no significant correlations between implementation index and any of the outcome variables, nor were there any statistically significant differences in outcomes when comparing schools with low implementation to those with high implementation. The differences between the two groups' suspension and offender rates and reading proficiency rates approached significance ($p < .15$).

Character Counts! Suspension Rates

Comparison of suspension rates for the low and high implementation programs (Table 44) shows a dramatic difference in suspension rates in 2004-2005. Analysis reveals a statistically significant negative correlation ($r = -.53, p < .001$) between implementation levels and suspension rates in 2004-2005. In 2005-2006, the difference in suspension rates between low and high implementation schools shrank to 8.1 vs. 19.8 (Table 46), which is marginally significant ($p = .1204$).

Findings were similar for data on the mean offender rates. Data for 2004-2005 (Table 44) show a large difference in mean offender rate between the low and the high implementation conditions (17.2 vs. 3.0, $p < .05$) and a relatively large negative correlation between implementation levels and offender rates ($r = -.52$, $p < .001$). In 2005-2006, the difference between low and high implementation schools shrank to 10.5 vs. 4.9 (Table 46), a difference which is marginally significant ($p = .1226$).

Character Counts! Attendance Rates

Comparison of attendance rates for the low and high implementation programs in Table 44 shows a moderate positive correlation between levels of program implementation and mean attendance rates in 2004-2005 ($r = .34$, $p < .05$). The 2004-2005 attendance rate in schools with low program implementation was 93.1, whereas in schools with high program implementation, it was 94.8. *T*-tests reveal a significant difference between implementation levels in 2004-2005 ($p < .05$). In 2005-2006 (see Table 46), schools with high implementation had higher attendance rates (95.3 vs. 94.8), but the difference was not statistically significant ($p = .26$).

Character Counts! Promotion Rates

Although schools with high program implementation in 2004-2005 had slightly higher promotion rates than schools with low implementation (96.7 vs. 95.6), the difference was not statistically significant (see Table 44). There was no correlation between implementation and promotion rates. In 2005-2006 (Table 46), schools with high implementation actually had lower promotion rates than schools with low implementation (96.7 vs. 98.0).

Character Counts! Dropout Rates

Analysis of data in Tables 44 and 46 shows a negative, but not statistically significant, correlation between levels of program implementation and dropout rates in both 2004-2005 ($r = -.58$, $p = .13$) and 2005-2006 ($r = -.37$, $p = .41$). The four schools with low program implementation in 2004-2005 had an average dropout rate of 4.17, while the one school with high implementation had a dropout rate of 0.93. In 2005-2006, the average dropout rate for the two schools with low implementation was 2.69, while for the one school with high implementation, the rate was 1.47. While these differences show the difference one would expect if the program were effective, the number of schools is too low for significant differences to be detected statistically.

Character Counts! MSA: Mean Percent Proficient

Data in Table 44 show that Maryland School Assessment performance was positively correlated with program implementation levels in 2004-2005 in both math ($r = .33$, $p < .05$) and reading ($r = .39$, $p < .01$). Schools with low program implementation averaged 51.0 percent proficient on math and 61.3 percent proficient on reading, while schools with high program implementation averaged 70.9 and 78.3, respectively. These differences between low and high implementation schools are statistically significant ($p < .01$). In 2005-2006, however, the relationship between program implementation and MSA performance in math disappears: schools with low implementation averaged 74.1 percent

proficient on math, while schools with high implementation averaged 74.3 (Table 46). In reading, although a small difference persists (67.9 vs. 76.8), it is only marginally statistically significant ($p = .1403$).

Character Counts! Summary

Character Counts! data show substantial differences by program implementation levels on suspension and offender rates, attendance rates, and proficiency in math and reading for the 2004-2005 school year. For the 2005-2006 school year, while marginally significant differences persist in suspension and offender rates and proficiency in reading, the differences largely disappear. This largely appears due to the marked improvement in all indicators evidenced by the schools in the low implementation category.

Discussion

This investigation examined three character education programs being delivered in Maryland as a part of the Partnerships in Character Education grant provided by the U. S. Department of Education to the Maryland State Department of Education: the Second Step[®] program in the Anne Arundel County public school system, Carroll County Public Schools' modified Lickona approach, and the Character Counts! Mid-Shore program in five school systems on the Eastern Shore. Data were analyzed only for behavior and academic outcomes from each of these three programs.

The project demonstrated positive student behavior effects in terms of decreased office referral rates in 48.3% of schools; decreased suspension rates in 43.0% of schools; and a significant relationship between implementation and suspension rates between implementation and offender rates. Positive student academic effects were also noted in terms of increased attendance rates in 67.7% of schools and a significant relationship between implementation and attendance rates ($p = .0065$, $d = 0.90$); increased honor roll rates in 77.3% of schools; and a significant relationship between implementation and math proficiency rates ($p = .0284$, $d = 0.69$), and reading proficiency rates ($p = .0099$, $d = 0.82$).

The project also demonstrated positive intermediate student effects through parent and community involvement: there was increased volunteering by parents and other adults in 75.0% of schools and increased mentoring by parents and other adults in 23.4% of schools.

Table 47 presents a summary of results in the matrix required by federal program coordinators.

Table 47. Summary of Program Outcomes

Student Effect	Outcome	Not Used
Discipline Issues	Decreased office referral rates in 48.3% of schools; decreased suspension rates in 43.0% of schools; significant relationship between implementation and suspension rates ($p = .0016$, $d = 1.12$), and offender rates ($p = .0013$, $d = 1.13$).	
Academic Achievement	Increased attendance rates in 67.7% of schools; significant relationship between implementation and attendance rates ($p = .0065$, $d = 0.90$). Increased honor roll rates in 77.3% of schools. Significant relationship between implementation and math proficiency rates ($p = .0284$, $d = 0.69$), and reading proficiency rates ($p = .0099$, $d = 0.82$).	
Participation in Extracurricular Activities		x
Intermediate Student Effects	Outcome	Not Used
Staff Morale		x
Parental and Community Involvement	Increased volunteering by parents and other adults in 75.0% of schools; increased mentoring by parents and other adults in 23.4% of schools.	
Faculty and Administration Involvement		x
School Climate Improvement		x
Other: _____		x

One of the added benefits of an evaluation of three programs simultaneously is the perspective it provides on comparing the effects of the three programs. While all three programs are intended to produce positive effects of student behavior and achievement, they are quite different in a number of areas.

Second Step[®] is a violence prevention curriculum designed for elementary and middle school students. It is a lesson-based curriculum that provides direct and specific instruction on social skills in the areas of empathy, anger management, and self control. These lessons are based on constructivist and behavioral learning methods that involve role playing and real-life situations. Of the three programs evaluated, it is the one with the most structure and proscription. While the “Winners Walk Tall” component of the Character Counts! Mid-Shore program does involve classroom presentations and discussion led by a community volunteer, these interactions are not designed or proscribed by educational experts.

Furthermore, the educational setting varies among the three programs. The Character Counts! Mid-Shore model is truly community-based. Although the “Winners Walk Tall” initiative takes place in the classroom, the larger program consists of partnerships among community leaders, businesses, and schools. Often non-educational social service organizations such as Recreation and Parks and county Health Departments are involved as partners. The Carroll County model also incorporates a high degree

of community partnership, although the program is managed and delivered from the school system central office and is implemented predominantly within the school setting. The Second Step[®] program is delivered in the classroom.

The analysis of academic and behavioral effects of the Second Step[®], Carroll County, and Character Counts! programs employed a quasi-experimental design, comparing outcomes among schools with varying degrees of program implementation. Implementation and outcomes were assessed for the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years. Academic and behavioral outcomes of programs that were only minimally implemented were compared to those with significant implementations.

Overall, Second Step[®] schools in 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 exhibited the highest performance outcomes of all program schools in nearly all areas. On the whole, these schools demonstrated low suspension and dropout rates; high attendance and promotion rates; and relatively high proficiency rates on State assessments in reading and math. Further examination of school performance by program implementation level reveals that some differences in outcomes between schools with low and high implementation levels do exist. Significant differences when comparing low to high implementation conditions were found for suspension and offender rates in 2004-2005, and marginally statistically significant differences for performance on MSA math in 2004-2005.

Carroll County schools in 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 demonstrated low suspension and dropout rates; high attendance and promotion rates; and relatively high proficiency rates on State reading and math assessments. Small non-statistically significant differences did exist between schools according to program implementation levels in 2004-2005. In 2005-2006, unexpectedly, schools with higher implementation had less desirable outcomes.

Five schools in the northwest region of Carroll County were selected for a separate analysis due to their involvement in unique activities funded by the Partnerships in Character Education grant. In both 2004-2005 and 2005-2006, the five schools in the Northwest region did evidence slightly lower suspension, offender, and dropout rates. These differences were not statistically significant, however. The small number of schools in the Northwest region made differences difficult to detect statistically.

Character Counts! data show substantial differences by program implementation levels on suspension and offender rates, attendance rates, and proficiency in math and reading for the 2004-2005 school year. For the 2005-2006 school year, while marginally significant differences persist in suspension and offender rates and proficiency in reading, the differences largely disappear. This largely appears due to the marked improvement in all indicators evidenced by the schools in the low implementation category.

The Maryland Partnerships in Character Education project demonstrated the greatest effect in the 2004-2005 school year, overall. This evaluation found the largest effect sizes in the Second Step[®] program in terms of suspension and offender rates. Large effect sizes were also found in the Character Counts! Mid-Shore program, which was effective in terms of both behavior and academic outcomes. The Carroll County program did demonstrate moderate to large effect sizes as well, although statistical

significance was not attained. Table 48 presents a comparison of program effect sizes for the 2004-2005 school year. (These data are presented in more detail in Tables 18, 28, and 44.)

Table 48. Comparison of Program Effect Sizes, 2004-2005

Outcome Measure	Second Step [®]			Carroll County			Character Counts! Mid-Shore		
	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>	<i>r</i> ²	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>	<i>r</i> ²	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>	<i>r</i> ²
Suspension Rate	.0153	3.32	.734	.1630	0.76	.125	.0008	2.14	.533
Offender Rate	.0162	3.25	.725	.1370	0.82	.143	.0006	2.15	.536
Attendance Rate	.2174	1.19	.260	.1646	0.74	.121	.0048	1.54	.374
Promotion Rate	.8843	0.13	.004	.3529	0.48	.055	.7306	0.15	.006
Dropout Rate	N/A	N/A	N/A	--	--	--	--	--	--
Math Proficiency	.1066	1.70	.419	.4298	0.41	.040	.0065	1.14	.309
Reading Proficiency	.2406	1.13	.241	.3965	0.44	.046	.0011	1.69	.416

Moderate effects were demonstrated in the 2005-2006 school year. Table 49 presents a comparison of program effect sizes for the 2005-2006 school year. (These data are presented in more detail in Tables 20, 30, and 46.)

Table 49. Comparison of Program Effect Sizes, 2005-2006

Outcome Measure	Second Step [®]			Carroll County			Character Counts! Mid-Shore		
	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>	<i>r</i> ²	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>	<i>r</i> ²	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>	<i>r</i> ²
Suspension Rate	.3652	0.95	.184	.1348	0.86	.155	.1204	0.79	.135
Offender Rate	.3378	1.02	.207	.1437	0.84	.149	.1226	0.78	.133
Attendance Rate	.1885	1.60	.390	.0657	1.10	.233	.2630	0.50	.058
Promotion Rate	.5336	0.74	.121	.6260	0.27	.018	.4998	0.30	.022
Dropout Rate	N/A	N/A	N/A	--	--	--	--	--	--
Math Proficiency	.4173	0.97	.192	.1441	0.87	.158	.9882	0.01	.000
Reading Proficiency	.4212	0.97	.191	.7713	0.16	.006	.1403	0.69	.107

It is important to note that each of the three programs is intended to meet particular needs and depends on the suitability of its delivery model for the school and community that implements it. A violence prevention curriculum such as Second Step[®] is only suitable for schools where a specific behavior problem is noted. It would most benefit students who lack skills in empathy, anger management, and self control. The Carroll County model would be appropriate for school systems with strong central office support where coordination of activities can be maintained. The Character Counts! Mid-Shore model relies on a community-based organization that recruits and trains volunteers and builds and maintains collaborative partnerships with school-based personnel.

While each of the three programs has a sound design, actual implementation rates varied among schools. Each program involves certain aspects that may limit its successful implementation.

The Second Step[®] program requires schools or districts to purchase its curriculum kits, one for each teacher presenting the material. It also requires all staff to be trained. While it is based on a train-the-trainer approach so that not all staff must attend the more costly training provided by Committee for Children personnel, the staff training is lengthy and detailed and requires dedicated and knowledgeable district coordinators. The Carroll County model is dependent on school-based personnel and student leaders to be implemented. While the energy and initiative of many of the character education representatives in the county is more than sufficient, program quality may lag as individuals change roles or as the school or county administrators shift educational priorities.

This evaluation study contributed the use of a detailed implementation assessment to the research literature. It is important to measure program implementation in order to accurately detect program effect. However, the study was limited by the lack of true experimental and control groups. It is possible that the detected relationship between implementation and outcomes is due to an inclination of school- or community-based personnel to implement character education programming more fully in higher-performing schools or schools with better student behavior, rather than due to a true impact of programming on outcomes. Future studies might take advantage of the implementation assessments used in the present study and use them in a randomized, controlled design evaluation in order to more confidently determine program effectiveness. The present study was also limited by a relatively small number of schools that may have masked program effects.

There were a number of lessons learned from the Maryland Partnerships in Character Education project that have implications for future character education programming in the state. First, program managers should establish realistic objectives based on baseline data. The targets established for this project may have been too high (i.e. expecting 100% of schools to demonstrate improvement). Patterns of improvement over prior years could have been examined to establish fair targets. Second, state and local program managers should provide continuing support over the duration of the grant to prevent a drop in performance after the first one or two years. Third, realistic procedures for all data collection above and beyond normal school data reporting need to be established in collaborative planning that includes school-based personnel. This project experienced delays and barriers in gathering data that are not normally collected, such as number of visits to the school by adult volunteers and mentors, office referrals, and honor roll performance. These data collection requirements placed additional burden on already busy school-based personnel. Fourth, character education program managers at the state education department and in local school systems should work with state and district leadership to ensure alignment of program goals with overall goals and planning. In Maryland, the outset of this character education grant coincided with the outset of federal and state school reform efforts. Both the No Child Left Behind Act and Maryland's signature Bridge to Excellence in Education Act prompted state and local officials to prioritize academic achievement. While character education can certainly contribute to this effort, as the present study attests, state and local policymakers did not consistently envision character education programming as a priority. This limited the focus and administrative resources that were accorded to the program. Future efforts should foster collaborative efforts to align the unique methods and objectives of character education with other educational initiatives. It is hoped

that the analysis provided in this evaluation will be helpful in Maryland's continuing efforts to improve the educational experiences of all children.

References

- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Committee for Children. (1992). *Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum*. Seattle, WA: Author.
- Covey, S. (1998). *Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens*. Simon & Schuster.
- Josephson Institute of Ethics. (2007). *Character Counts!* Retrieved October 1, 2007, from <http://www.charactercounts.org>.
- Maryland State Department of Education. (2005). *Suspensions, Expulsions, and Health Related Exclusions: Maryland Public Schools: 2004-2005*. Retrieved February 26, 2007, from <http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/planningresultstest/2004-2005+Student+Publications.htm>.
- Maryland State Department of Education. (2006). *Suspensions, Expulsions, and Health Related Exclusions: Maryland Public Schools: 2005-2006*. Retrieved February 26, 2007, from <http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/planningresultstest/2005-2006+Student+Publications.htm>.
- Rosnow, R. L., & Rosenthal, R. (1996). Computing contrasts, effect sizes, and counternulls on other people's published data: General procedures for research consumers. *Psychological Methods, 1*, 331-340.

APPENDIX A: SECOND STEP[®] IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT

School Name: _____

Elementary

Middle

Date Completed: _____

Rater Name: _____

Position: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

**Second Step Implementation Assessment
School Year 2005-2006**

I. Training

1. Teachers (including long-term substitutes)

a) How many teachers were in the school this school year? _____

b) How many of these teachers have been trained in Second Step? _____

2. Administrative/Guidance Staff

a) How many administrative/guidance staff were in the school this school year? _____

b) How many of these administrative/guidance staff have been trained in Second Step? _____

3. Other School Staff

a) How many other school staff were in the school this school year? _____

b) How many of these other school staff have been trained in Second Step? _____

II. Classroom implementation

4a. How many teachers or other staff delivered the Second Step curriculum this school year? _____

4b. How many teachers or other staff delivering the Second Step curriculum *have been trained* in the program? _____

4c. How many teachers or other staff delivering the Second Step curriculum *haven't been trained* in the program? _____

5. Of those who have delivered the Second Step curriculum this year, how many have followed the schedule for teaching Second Step lessons? _____

6a. How many curriculum kits does the school have? _____

6b. Was the number of kits sufficient for teachers/staff to deliver the curriculum this school year?

YES NO

7a. How many classes are in the school? _____

7b. How many classes were taught Second Step this school year? _____

8. What proportion of lessons were taught following the structured format?

None Few About half Most All

9a. How many classrooms are in the school? _____

9b. How many classrooms have Second Step Anger Management posters? _____ or N/A

9c. How many classrooms have Second Step Problem Solving posters? _____ or N/A

9d. How many classrooms have Second Step Calm Down posters? _____ or N/A

9e. How many classrooms do not have any Second Step posters? _____

III. Integration into curriculum and school building

10. Which common areas have Second Step posters?

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| a) Most hallways | YES | NO | N/A |
| b) Main office | YES | NO | N/A |
| c) Guidance/counseling office | YES | NO | N/A |
| d) Health room/nurse's office | YES | NO | N/A |
| e) Teachers lounge | YES | NO | N/A |
| f) Media center/library | YES | NO | N/A |
| g) Cafeteria | YES | NO | N/A |
| h) Gym | YES | NO | N/A |
| i) Auditorium | YES | NO | N/A |
| j) Most resource rooms | YES | NO | N/A |
| k) Other: _____ | YES | NO | N/A |
| l) Other: _____ | YES | NO | N/A |
| m) Other: _____ | YES | NO | N/A |

11. What proportion of all school staff have used "transfer of learning" methods on a daily basis this school year (e.g., Remember the Day, Think About the Day, teachable moments)?

None Few About half Most All

12a. What proportion of teachers have used Second Step language on a daily basis this school year?

None Few About half Most All

12b. What proportion of administrators/guidance staff have used Second Step language on a daily basis this school year?

None Few About half Most All

12c. What proportion of other school staff have used Second Step language on a daily basis this school year?

None Few About half Most All

12d. What proportion of students have used Second Step language on a daily basis this school year?

None Few About half Most All

13a. What proportion of teachers have been enthusiastic supporters of the program this school year?

None Few About half Most All

13b. What proportion of administrators/guidance staff have been enthusiastic supporters of the program this school year?

None Few About half Most All

13c. What proportion of other school staff have been enthusiastic supporters of the program this school year?

None Few About half Most All

14. How frequently have Second Step messages been used in morning announcements throughout the year?

Daily At least once a week At least once a month Less than once a month Never

IV. Targeted interventions

15. Does the school have a policy of providing additional Second Step intervention to students beyond the scheduled curriculum, either individually or in small groups?

YES NO

16. What proportion of students who need further instruction in Second Step skills have received small group or individual intervention this school year?

None Few About half Most All

V. Parent and community involvement

17. What proportion of issues of the school/guidance newsletter have included information about Second Step this school year?

N/A (The school does not have a newsletter) None Few About half Most All

18. What proportion of Second Step "Take-Home Letters" from the curriculum kit were distributed to parents/families this school year?

None Few About half Most All

19. How many Second Step parent/family nights/workshops were offered this school year? _____

20. On average, what portion of the students have a parent or family member who attended at least one Second Step parent/family night/workshop this school year?

None Few About half Most All

VI. Other implementation information

21. On what date did Second Step instruction begin this school year? _____

22. On what date did or will Second Step instruction end this school year? _____

23. In which class or period has Second Step been taught this school year? _____

24. How often was Second Step taught this school year? (e.g., weekly, biweekly) _____

25. What other behavior/character education programs has the school used this school year?

- | | | | |
|--|-----|----|-----|
| a) Core Essentials | YES | NO | N/A |
| b) FISH | YES | NO | N/A |
| c) No Put Downs | YES | NO | N/A |
| d) PBIS | YES | NO | N/A |
| e) Steps to Respect | YES | NO | N/A |
| f) Other school-designed character education | YES | NO | N/A |

Please describe briefly:

- | | | | |
|------------------|-----|----|-----|
| g) Other program | YES | NO | N/A |
|------------------|-----|----|-----|

Name: _____

Please describe briefly:

APPENDIX B: CARROLL COUNTY IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT

School Name: _____ School Number: _____

School's Character Education/Discipline Committee Representative Info

Name: _____

Position: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Date Completed: _____

**Character Education Implementation Assessment
Carroll County Public Schools
School Year 2005-2006**

A. Character traits are widely known throughout the school.

1. Are the character traits incorporated into the school mission statement?

YES

NO

SCHOOL DOES NOT HAVE A MISSION STATEMENT

2. Are the character traits incorporated into the school discipline code?

YES

NO

SCHOOL DOES NOT HAVE A SCHOOL DISCIPLINE CODE

3. What proportion of school staff (including counselors, administrators, teachers, and other school staff) referred to the character traits in interactions with students, when appropriate, this school year?

None

Few

About half

Most

All

4. Which common areas had visual displays of the traits this school year?

a) Most hallways YES NO N/A

b) Main office YES NO N/A

c) Guidance/counseling office YES NO N/A

d) Health room/nurse's office YES NO N/A

e) Media center/library YES NO N/A

f) Cafeteria OR gym OR Auditorium YES NO N/A

g) Most classrooms YES NO N/A

h) Other: _____ YES NO N/A

i) Other: _____ YES NO N/A

5. What proportion of teaching staff integrated character education into the content of their subjects this school year?

None

Few

About half

Most

All

6. How often did your school incorporate the character education traits into the morning announcements this school year?

Never Once a marking period Monthly Weekly Daily

B. The school makes it a priority to foster a caring and welcoming atmosphere throughout the building.

1. What proportion of teachers provided social/emotional support and nurturance in appropriate situations (such as making suggestions, listening to students' problems, and making referrals for counseling) this school year?

None Few About half Most All

2. What proportion of teachers offered and provided extra academic support or help to students (such as meeting with students after school or during free time, or making individual referrals to academic support services) this school year?

None Few About half Most All

3. How often did the staff in the main office greet parents, visitors, and students in a positive, respectful manner this school year?

Never Rarely Sometimes FrequentlyAlways

4. What proportion of classrooms had environments in which respect and kindness were the standard this school year?

None Few About half Most All

5. Did the school take steps to prevent bullying and other forms of harassment this school year?

Never Rarely Sometimes FrequentlyAlways

6. Did the school take steps to deal with bullying and other forms of harassment when they occurred this school year?

Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently Always

7. How effective have the school's interventions into bullying and harassment been this school year?

Not Effective A Little Somewhat Effective Very Effective

8. How often did staff members work together and resolve their own interpersonal conflicts, when they occurred this school year?

Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently Always

C. Students are provided with opportunities for service-learning.

1. Did the school provide opportunities for engaging in moral action and service within the school this school year?

Never **Rarely** **Seldom** **Frequently** **Always**

2. Did the school provide opportunities for engaging in moral action and service in the larger community this school year?

Never **Rarely** **Seldom** **Frequently** **Always**

3. Did service-learning activities meet a recognized community need (in areas of health, education, environment and/or public safety) this school year?

A – No need identified

B – Need identified but its relevance to community is not explored in depth

C – Need and its relevance are clearly identified and focused upon throughout the project

D – Recognized need identified through research or a needs assessment

4. Did the school achieve curricular objectives through service-learning (for both infused and independent projects) this school year?

A – No link between curricular objectives and the project

B – Implied link made to curricular objectives, but not intentionally developed

C – Demonstrable link made to curricular objectives

D – Many demonstrable links made to curricular objectives, state standards, core learning goals, and other education reform initiatives

5. Did students reflect throughout the service-learning experience this school year?

A – No reflection evident

B – Brief reflection evident at conclusion of project

C – Reflection completed periodically throughout the project addressing root causes of issues

D – Reflection completed throughout the project addressing various learning styles and exploring causes of need, project impact, and personal and academic growth

6. Did service-learning develop student responsibility this school year?
- A – No student responsibility evident
 - B – Students given some choice in project development
 - C – Students share responsibility with educator for project development and implementation
 - D – Students responsible for project creation, organization, and implementation
7. Did service-learning establish community partnerships this school year?
- A – No community partnership made
 - B – Limited contact with community partner(s) for information and resources
 - C – Students interact/meet with community partner(s) (e.g. CBO presents to class)
 - D – Students and community partner(s) collaborate as an action team on project
8. Did the school plan ahead for service-learning this school year?
- A – No planning evident
 - B – Minimal planning evident
 - C – Adequate planning evident to meet the community need and curricular goals
 - D – Extensive planning evident to focus the service-learning project on meeting the need and curricular goals (e.g. multidisciplinary initiatives, multiple partners, and school-wide awareness and support of project)
9. Did the school equip students with knowledge and skills needed for service this school year?
- A – No attempt made to equip students with knowledge and skills
 - B – Minimal knowledge/skills provided about the community need and its cause
 - C – Knowledge/skills provided about the community need, causes, and about civic engagement
 - D – Students equipped with demonstrable knowledge/skills about the community need, causes, and about active civic engagement

D. The school provides opportunities for student leadership in character education programming and strategies.

1. What proportion of your character education programs this school year involved students as leaders in planning and implementing activities?

None Few About half Most All

2. What proportion of students actively participated in character education efforts this school year?

None Few About half Most All

3. What proportion of students carried out leadership roles within the classroom and school community this school year (e.g., safety patrol, morning announcements, buddies, student government, peer mediation, peer facilitation, mentorship, etc.)?

None Few About half Most All

4. How often did students provide input into school programs and other issues, besides character education, this school year?

Never Rarely Sometimes FrequentlyAlways

5. How often did the school provide appropriate training for student leaders this school year (such as Leadership Days, safety patrol training, peer tutoring training, peer mediation training, peer facilitator training, student council training)?

Never Rarely Sometimes FrequentlyAlways

E. Teachers and staff share responsibility for character education.

1. What proportion of teachers, counselors and administrators received training or information from the school's character education / discipline committee representative this school year?

None Few About half Most All

2. What proportion of other school staff (bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers, office staff, instructional assistants) received training or information from the school's character education / discipline committee representative this school year?

None Few About half Most All

3. What proportion of teachers, counselors and administrators were involved in designing character education programs and activities in the school this school year?

None Few About half Most All

4. What proportion of teachers, counselors and administrators were involved in planning and implementing character education programs and activities in the school this school year?

None Few About half Most All

5. What proportion of other school staff (bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers, office staff, instructional assistants) were involved in designing character education programs and activities in the school this school year?

None Few About half Most All

6. What proportion of other school staff (bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers, office staff, instructional assistants) were involved in the planning and implementation of character education programs and activities in the school this school year?

None Few About half Most All

F. Families and community members are partners in the character building effort.

1. How often has the school appropriately incorporated character education into communications with parents and families this school year?

Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently Always

2. How often has the school conveyed information about the character traits and character education concepts and programs to the school neighborhood/community (through school improvement team efforts, events, newsletters, etc.) this school year?

Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently Always

3. What proportion of parents and guardians have been active contributors to and participants in school and classroom events this school year?

None Few About half Most All

4. Please think about the extent to which your school has formed partnerships with available businesses or community organizations to strengthen connections and advance character education this school year. For each item (A) through (J), please place a check mark in the column that most closely matches your school's situation this past school year.

	Not At All True	Somewhat True	Pretty True	Very True	Does Not Apply
A) Our school cares about forming business or community partnerships to advance character education.					
B) Our school has unmet character education needs that could be fulfilled by partnerships with local businesses or organizations.					
C) People at our school know how to go about forming business or community partnerships to advance character education.					
D) There are enough appropriate businesses or organizations in our area with which our school could form partnerships to advance character education.					
E) Our school has tried to form partnerships with local business or community organizations to advance character education.					
F) Local businesses or community organizations have declined to participate in partnerships with our school to advance character education.					
G) Our school has partnerships with as many local businesses and organizations as possible to advance character education.					
H) Local businesses or community organizations have initiated partnerships with our school to advance character education.					
I) Our school's partnerships with local business or community organizations meet all our school's character education needs.					
J) Our school's partnerships with local business or community organizations have a noticeable effect on the character of our school.					

G. Effective character education is promoted through school leadership and support of the character education initiatives.

1. What proportion of all school staff define and model the traits on a regular basis?

None Few About half Most All

2. Does the school principal stress that character is integral to the mission of the school?

Not at all A little Somewhat Strongly Very strongly

3. Is there an ongoing leadership group that guides the planning and implementation of the character education program?

YES NO

4. If so, does the leadership group encourage the involvement of the whole school (administrators, counselors, teachers, other school staff, and students) in planning and implementing character-related activities?

YES

NO

5. What proportion of all school staff are enthusiastic supporters of the program?

None

Few

About half

Most

All

APPENDIX C: CHARACTER COUNTS! IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT

School System: _____

Rater Name: _____

School Name: _____

Position: _____

Elementary

Phone Number: _____

Middle

E-mail Address: _____

High

Date Completed: _____

Character Counts! Mid-Shore Implementation Assessment

School Year 2005-2006

Note: In this assessment, "Character Counts!" refers to all of the various programs as a whole; some items refer specifically to the "6 Pillars," "Winners Walk Tall," or the "Laws of Life Essay."

1. Which common areas have Character Counts! posters, displays, or banners displaying the 6 Pillars? Which common areas have other character education displays? (Circle as many as apply for each item.)

a) Most hallways	Character Counts!	Other Character Ed	None	N/A
b) Main office	Character Counts!	Other Character Ed	None	N/A
c) Guidance/counseling office	Character Counts!	Other Character Ed	None	N/A
d) Health room/nurse's office	Character Counts!	Other Character Ed	None	N/A
e) Teachers lounge	Character Counts!	Other Character Ed	None	N/A
f) Media center/library	Character Counts!	Other Character Ed	None	N/A
g) Cafeteria	Character Counts!	Other Character Ed	None	N/A
h) Gym	Character Counts!	Other Character Ed	None	N/A
i) Auditorium	Character Counts!	Other Character Ed	None	N/A
j) Most resource rooms	Character Counts!	Other Character Ed	None	N/A
k) Other: _____	Character Counts!	Other Character Ed	None	N/A
l) Other: _____	Character Counts!	Other Character Ed	None	N/A

2. In what ways are the materials in the school's media center or library used to support and encourage character education?

a) There is a "Character Corner" or area set aside with character education

books and materials for students and staff YES NO

- b) A list of character education books and materials is posted and visible YES NO
- c) The librarian or media center specialist provides support upon request YES NO
- d) Materials are used in programs about character education YES NO
- e) Other (specify): _____ YES NO
3. What proportion of teachers have incorporated the principles represented by the 6 Pillars into their curriculum on a daily basis this school year?
- None Few About half Most All
- 4a. What proportion of teachers have referred to the principles represented by the 6 Pillars on a daily basis (not including usage in the curriculum) this school year?
- None Few About half Most All
- b. What proportion of administrators/guidance staff have referred to the principles represented by the 6 Pillars on a daily basis this school year?
- None Few About half Most All
- c. What proportion of other school staff have referred to the principles represented by the 6 Pillars on a daily basis this school year?
- None Few About half Most All
- d. What proportion of students have referred to the principles represented by the 6 Pillars on a daily basis this school year?
- None Few About half Most All
- 5a. What proportion of teachers have been enthusiastic supporters of the Character Counts! program this school year?
- None Few About half Most All
- b. What proportion of administrators/guidance staff have been enthusiastic supporters of the Character Counts! program this school year?
- None Few About half Most All
- c. What proportion of other school staff have been enthusiastic supporters of the Character Counts! program this school year?
- None Few About half Most All

6. How frequently have character-related messages reflective of the principles represented by the 6 Pillars been used in morning announcements throughout the year this school year?

Daily At least once a week At least once a month Less than once a month Never

7a. What proportion of teachers have consistently modeled the character traits represented by the 6 Pillars this school year?

None Few About half Most All

b. What proportion of administrators/guidance staff have consistently modeled the character traits represented by the 6 Pillars this school year?

None Few About half Most All

c. What proportion of other school staff have consistently modeled the character traits represented by the 6 Pillars this school year?

None Few About half Most All

8a. How many classrooms have 6 Pillars displays? _____

b. How many classrooms do NOT have 6 Pillars displays? _____

9a. When students displayed behavior consistent with the 6 Pillars this school year, how much of the time were they rewarded with individual praise?

Rarely or never Sometimes Frequently Every time

b. When students displayed behavior consistent with the 6 Pillars this school year, how much of the time were they rewarded with public praise or recognition?

Rarely or never Sometimes Frequently Every time

c. When students displayed behavior consistent with the 6 Pillars this school year, how much of the time were they rewarded with material rewards?

Rarely or never Sometimes Frequently Every time

10a. When teachers disciplined students this school year, how often did they refer to the character traits represented by the 6 Pillars?

Rarely or never Sometimes Frequently Every time

b. When administrators and other school staff disciplined students this school year, how often did they refer to the character traits represented by the 6 Pillars?

Rarely or never Sometimes Frequently Every time

11. What proportion of the students were supplied with character-based agenda/homework books this school year?

None Few About half Most All

12a. *(Elementary and middle schools only)* How many classes are in the school? _____

b. *(Elementary and middle schools only)* How many classes had an assigned Character Coach (Winners Walk Tall) this school year? _____

13. *(Elementary and middle schools only)* What proportion of Character Coach/Winners Walk Tall lessons were taught using developmentally appropriate content and format this school year?

None Few About half Most All

14a. *(Elementary and middle schools only)* When teachers disciplined students this school year, how much of the time did they refer to the Character Coach/Winners Walk Tall lessons?

Rarely or never Sometimes Frequently Every time

b. *(Elementary and middle schools only)* When administrators and other school staff disciplined students this school year, how much of the time did they refer to the Character Coach/Winners Walk Tall lessons?

Rarely or never Sometimes Frequently Every time

15a. How many classrooms have Character Coach/Winners Walk Tall displays or signs? _____

b. How many classrooms do NOT have Winners Walk Tall displays or signs? _____

16a. How many classrooms have other character-related displays or signs (besides the 6 Pillars and Character Coach/Winners Walk Tall displays)? _____

b. How many classrooms do NOT have ANY character-related displays or signs? _____

17a. How many students wrote a Laws of Life essay this year? _____

b. How many of these students submitted their Laws of Life essay to the contest? _____

c. How many students are in your school? _____

18a. How many school/guidance newsletters were sent home to parents/families this school year? _____

b. How many issues of the school/guidance newsletter this school year included information about Character Counts! (specifically)? _____

c. How many issues of the school/guidance newsletter this school year included information about other character education (not specifically Character Counts!)? _____

19. Did the school have a business partner to support character education initiatives this school year?

YES NO

If yes, did the business partner provide (this school year):

- a) Financial support for character programs at school YES NO
- b) Volunteer support for character programs at school YES NO
- c) A member of the School Improvement Team YES NO
- d) Other types of school support (specify): _____ YES NO
- e) Promotion of character principles to employees YES NO
- f) Promotion of character principles in ads and public displays YES NO
- g) Other (specify): _____ YES NO

20. How would you describe the school’s character education program in relation to Character Counts!? Please identify how true each of the following statements is for your school by checking one option for each item:

	STRONGLY AGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW
<i>a) Character Counts! is the center of character education at our school</i>						
<i>b) Our school has a wide variety of character education programs and activities</i>						
<i>c) Students at our school are explicitly taught the “6 Pillars”</i>						
<i>d) If it weren’t for Character Counts!, there wouldn’t be much character education at our school</i>						
<i>e) Our school staff would like more character education besides Character Counts!</i>						
<i>f) We don’t do much in the way of character education besides the character coaches, showing the 6 Pillars, and/or having students participate in the Laws of Life Essay.</i>						

	STRONGLY AGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW
<i>g) We were already doing character education before Character Counts! came along</i>						
<i>h) Our school staff actively seeks out character education programs and ideas without assistance from Character Counts!</i>						
<i>i) Our school needs Character Counts! to provide more character education opportunities</i>						

21. Which of the following methods to publicize Character Counts! in the community have been used since September, 2004?

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| a) TV ads or spots | YES | NO |
| If yes: | | |
| How many TV stations? _____ | | |
| How many ads or spots total? _____ | | |
| How many times did they run, all together? _____ | | |
| b) Radio ads or spots | YES | NO |
| If yes: | | |
| How many radio stations? _____ | | |
| How many ads or spots total? _____ | | |
| How many times did they run, all together? _____ | | |
| c) Outdoor public displays of the 6 Pillars | YES | NO |
| If yes, how many? _____ | | |
| d) Newspaper ads or spots | YES | NO |
| If yes: | | |
| How many newspapers? _____ | | |
| How many ads or spots total? _____ | | |
| How many times did they run, all together? _____ | | |
| e) "Character Corner" or special area in the local public library | YES | NO |
| f) Public meetings | YES | NO |
| If yes, how many? _____ | | |
| g) Proclamations | YES | NO |
| If yes, how many? _____ | | |
| h) Community or health fairs | YES | NO |
| If yes, how many? _____ | | |
| i) Other (specify): _____ | YES | NO |
| If yes, how many? _____ | | |

Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools

Ronald A. Peiffer
Deputy State Superintendent
Office of Academic Policy

Dunbar Brooks
President
Maryland State Board of Education

Martin O'Malley
Governor

Ann E. Chafin
Assistant State Superintendent
Division of Student, Family, and School Support

Thomas Rhoades
Director
Office of Comprehensive Planning and School Support

Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

www.marylandpublicschools.org

410.767.0600
1.888.246.0016
410.333.6442 (TTY)

©2007 Maryland State Department of Education
October 2007

The Maryland State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age, national origin, religion, disability, or sexual orientation in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs.

For inquiries related to departmental policy, please contact

Equity Assurance and Compliance Branch

200 West Baltimore Street

Baltimore, Maryland 21201

410-767-0426 VOICE

410-333-6442 TTY/TDD

410-333-2226 FAX