

2007



# GROWING CHARACTER CULTIVATING ACHIEVEMENT



Evaluation results from the Maryland Partnerships in Character Education grant







Growing Character, Cultivating Achievement:  
Evaluation results from the Maryland Partnerships in Character  
Education grant

Funded through the Partnerships in Character Education Grant,  
Title 4, Elementary and Secondary Education Act

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# THREE APPROACHES TO CHARACTER EDUCATION

Second Step<sup>®</sup>

Lickona Model

Character Counts!

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# MARYLAND PARTNERSHIPS IN CHARACTER EDUCATION GRANT

## What was the grant's purpose?

The Maryland Partnerships in Character Education grant was a five-year process beginning in 2002 with a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The Maryland State Department of Education partnered with seven local school systems to implement and evaluate the impact of three character education models on student academic performance and behavior.

Character education is the intentional process of fostering character development by integrating the teaching of cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral skills into all aspects of school life. It assists students in developing qualities that enable them to treat themselves and others with respect and compassion, to act with integrity in their ethical lives, and to strive for excellence in all their pursuits.

## Which school systems and programs were involved?

Anne Arundel County implemented the Second Step® model, a pre-K through 8 curriculum from the Committee for Children that focuses on empathy, impulse control, anger management, and problem solving to reduce aggressive behaviors and increase social competency. Carroll County developed a districtwide approach to character education that is based on the research of Thomas Lickona. This approach — referred to as the “modified Lickona Model” — teaches respect and responsibility through moral and ethical development, promotes service-learning and a schoolwide sense of community, and fosters youth leadership. Character Counts! Mid-Shore used a modified version of the Character Counts! model, based on six pillars of character, in five counties (Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Talbot, and Queen Anne’s). Statewide, the Maryland Partnerships in Character Education grant involved 102 schools.

**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   |





## What were the grant's objectives?

- To evaluate the implementation of the Second Step® program, Carroll County's modified Lickona approach, and the community-based Character Counts! model
- To identify and partner with five additional school systems to replicate those program models found to be effective
- To increase student participation, pro-social behaviors, and academic success as measured by data on attendance, office referrals, suspension, and honor roll achievement
- To increase parent and community participation in character education as evidenced through volunteer activities and mentoring roles
- To provide technical support in the areas of curriculum implementation, exemplary instructional materials, and evaluation tools through a series of two regional meetings annually

## How was the grant evaluation designed?

To analyze the academic and behavioral effects of the three character education programs, the grant's evaluators employed a quasi-experimental design based on the level of implementation (high, medium, or low). Implementation and outcomes were assessed each year of the grant.

Evaluation of implementation level for the 2004-05 and 2005-06 school years was based on a more rigorous set of criteria. These criteria produced a more accurate reporting of the degree of implementation of the character education model in each school.

The evaluation based on the more rigorous criteria provided a richer and more accurate picture of how the character education models were influencing achievement and school climate. Thus, the research for the 2004-05 and 2005-06 school years, included in this report, was able to reflect a more detailed understanding of what was occurring in each school as it implemented its particular character education model.



## Where can I find more information?

This publication provides only a summary of the Maryland Partnerships in Character Education evaluation. A thorough discussion of the evaluation design, methods, and findings can be found in "Estimating Relationships Between Program Implementation and Academic and Behavioral Outcomes: An Evaluation of Three Models of Character Education in Maryland." This report can be found on the Maryland State Department of Education website, [www.MarylandPublicSchools.org](http://www.MarylandPublicSchools.org), under Character Education.

# THREE APPROACHES TO ONE GOAL

Effective character education is tailored to the needs of students, schools, and communities. There is no single "cookie cutter" approach that can be used. From system to system, school to school, needs vary. The Maryland Partnerships in Education grant project recognized this and provided school systems the flexibility to choose (or develop) programs that met the needs of their populations. Although three different programs were implemented, all shared the **overarching goal of improving school climate by instilling good character.**

## Second Step® (Anne Arundel County)

Second Step® is a violence-prevention program that develops empathy, impulse control, problem-solving skills, and emotional management in students. Schools teach these skills through discussions, role-play, and modeling. Second Step® is a stand-alone curriculum, but school personnel connect its techniques to the academic curriculum and reinforce them throughout the school day at "teachable moments."

Parents and family members can reinforce at home the social skills taught by Second Step®. 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, and parents of middle-schoolers can attend family night programs. To further facilitate home-school communication, the Second Step® curriculum provides letter templates for school personnel to send home. The letters describe the social skills children are learning and how parents can reinforce them.

Select staff members from participating schools are trained by Second Step® trainers. 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 consistently, fifty-minute lessons are presented regularly at one- or two-week intervals.

## Modified Lickona (Carroll County)

The Carroll County Public Schools character education program took effect in all schools in the 1999-2000 school year and emphasized a shared responsibility for teaching and modeling character among the school, family, and community. The school system developed the program based on values identified by a 1998 community survey. The program calls for all adults in the school, family, and community to model and reinforce positive character traits. Accordingly, the school system focuses its character education activities on student leadership and staff development designed to change school climate and set positive examples for students.

The school system's character education steering committee leads the character initiative. The committee meets every other month to plan activities and write a monthly newsletter, which is sent to about 300 community organizations and parents. During these meetings, Carroll County teachers and school staff have the opportunity to share best practices. Each school improvement team develops its own programs and activities based on the systemwide goals and monthly traits. School efforts range from character-focused bulletin board displays and morning announcements, to curricular tie-ins that use grade-appropriate reading materials discussing character traits, to community service activities such as food drives. The school system also hosts an annual Character Education Institute designed to give participants strategies to take back to their classrooms.

Students have numerous opportunities to learn about positive character traits and habits. All ninth graders participate in a daily, 90-minute freshman seminar for one quarter. The course focuses on topics such as career and education planning, study skills, character education and service-learning. Students identified by staff as the school's social "leaders" are invited to attend a "Leadership Day" which focuses on ethics, leadership within the school, and community service.

### Northwest Region

Character education program managers identified specific needs in Carroll County's Northwest Region based on findings of relatively high rates of poverty, drug use by parents, and family dysfunction. They also identified a lack of capacity in the community to adjust to new growth and diversity in the area. A character program and a new parent-community liaison position were developed to address these challenges.

The liaison directs the program in three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Working with staff and students, the liaison promotes achievement, attendance, and parent involvement. In conjunction with the area's pupil personnel worker, the liaison makes home visits and conducts student-led conferences with parents. Other programs and activities coordinated by the liaison include mentoring programs, after-school programs, holiday programs, motivational speakers, and parent workshops. The liaison also helps connect parents needing assistance to appropriate community agencies and encourages parents to get involved in their children's education.



## Character Counts! Mid-Shore (Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Talbot)

Character Counts! Mid-Shore is a non-profit organization headquartered in Talbot County. 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 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.

The Character Counts! Mid-Shore program provides several school-based initiatives in Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot counties. The in-school activities address students of different age groups. The Winners Walk Tall program for elementary and middle schools trains community volunteers to serve as "character coaches" in weekly classroom presentations. In these presentations, volunteers share personal experiences and lead classes in activities that reinforce the program's six character ideals. Classroom teachers then reinforce the messages of these presentations by infusing them into the curriculum.

"Take Five for Character" is a sports ethics program that trains volunteer coaches in youth sports leagues to facilitate team discussions of sports-related ethical situations. The "Laws of Life" essay contest, based on the essay contest designed by the Templeton Foundation, offers students in middle and high schools the opportunity to think about character traits that are important to them. Contest winners are chosen by Mid-Shore leadership, and one winner from each school receives a cash prize. In addition, schools develop 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 support the program.

# WAS PROGRESS MADE TOWARD GRANT OBJECTIVES?

Yes. Although the grant's objectives were ambitious, most were met. Among those not met, significant progress was made.

## ✓ Objective One—Met

Objective: To evaluate the implementation of the Second Step® program, Carroll County's modified Lickona Model, and the community-based Character Counts! model

These evaluations are complete. Evaluators worked with each program's managers to design assessment tools that measure each school's level of implementation (high, medium, low). Program managers have also used assessment results to improve school-level implementation.

## ✓ Objective Two—Met

Objective: To identify and partner with five additional school systems to replicate those program models found to be effective

This objective was accomplished. The Character Counts! Mid-Shore initiative was expanded to include Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester counties. The Second Step® model has been implemented in Kent and Garrett counties. Strategies in the Carroll County Lickona Model have been shared with other school systems statewide.

## ↑ Objective Three—Progress Made

Objective: To increase student participation, pro-social behaviors and academic success as measured by data on attendance, office referrals, suspensions, and honor roll achievement

The ambitious goal of 100% of schools seeing increases in these areas was not met. However, significant progress was made:

- Two-thirds (67.7%) of participating schools had increased attendance rates.
- Nearly half (48.3%) had reduced office referral rates and improved suspension rates (43%).
- Three-fourths (77.3%) had increased honor roll rates.

## ↑ Objective Four—Progress Made

Objective: To increase parent and community participation in character education as evidenced through volunteer activities and mentoring roles

The ambitious goal of 100% of schools seeing increases in these areas was not met. However, significant progress was made: three quarters of the schools (75%) showed increases in adult volunteering, and one quarter of the schools (23.4%) showed increases in the number of visits by adult mentors. On average, participating schools increased the annual number of visits by adult volunteers by 171 visits, and visits by adult mentors by three visits.

## ✓ Objective Five—Met

Objective: To provide technical support in the areas of curriculum implementation, exemplary instructional materials, and evaluation tools through a series of two regional meetings annually

This objective was met. The state-level character education specialist along with coordinators from the participating counties and national experts in character education conducted two statewide trainings each year.

Most recently in March and September 2007, two conferences were held to discuss best practices discovered as a result of the grant: *Growing Together: Integrating Character Education for Academic Achievement* and *Character Education: A Framework for Academic Excellence*.

Statewide trainings were conducted in September 2005 and April 2006. Regional trainings were conducted at the June 2005 Character Counts! Connecting the Pieces Conference, the July 2005 and 2006 Character Education Institutes in Carroll County, the September 2005 Western Maryland Student Services Conference, and the February 2006 Eastern Shore Guidance Conference.







# WHAT WERE THE FINDINGS FOR EACH PROGRAM?

## Second Step® in Anne Arundel County

Although Second Step® is a scripted program, implementation varies by site and school year. An implementation assessment was designed to determine the level at which each school was implementing Second Step®. The implementation assessment included items on school-wide training, classroom implementation, integration into the curriculum and school building, targeted interventions, and parent and community involvement. The distribution of schools according to level of implementation is shown below.

**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    |

## Improving Student Achievement and Behavior

The Maryland Partnerships in Character Education grant proposal identified one project objective involving measures of student achievement and behavior: 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. Displayed below is the performance of Anne Arundel County schools implementing Second Step®.

**Performance of Participating  
Anne Arundel County Schools**

| 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%               |





## Increasing Parent and Community Involvement

The Maryland Partnerships in Character Education grant proposal identified one project objective involving parents and the community: Parents and other community members will become more active participants as evidenced through volunteer activities and mentoring roles. Displayed below is the performance of Anne Arundel County schools implementing Second Step.

### Performance of Participating Anne Arundel County Schools

| 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%              |

## Performance by Level of Implementation

In the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years, schools with a high level of implementation of the Second Step® program demonstrated, on average, 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 Assessment in math and reading. See the tables below.

### 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**<br>(3)    | 2.7**<br>(3)  | 94.9<br>(3)     | 98.7<br>(3)    | 83.0*<br>(3)          | 82.9<br>(3)              |
| Medium                  | 4.4<br>(5)      | 2.8<br>(5)    | 95.2<br>(5)     | 99.4<br>(5)    | 82.0<br>(5)           | 80.7<br>(5)              |
| High                    | 1.3**<br>(3)    | 0.9**<br>(3)  | 95.6<br>(3)     | 98.8<br>(3)    | 85.7*<br>(3)          | 84.4<br>(3)              |

\* $p < .15$     \*\* $p < .05$

### 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<br>(3)     | 12.3<br>(3)   | 94.2<br>(3)     | 96.8<br>(3)    | 74.4<br>(3)           | 76.4<br>(3)              |
| Medium                  | 5.3<br>(6)      | 2.7<br>(6)    | 95.3<br>(6)     | 99.5<br>(6)    | 87.2<br>(6)           | 82.8<br>(6)              |
| High                    | 4.0<br>(2)      | 2.7<br>(2)    | 95.9<br>(2)     | 99.0<br>(2)    | 87.3<br>(2)           | 88.2<br>(2)              |

( ) Number of Schools

## Modified Lickona in Carroll County

Carroll County's school administrators and student leaders plan character education programming based on the needs of their schools and communities. Thus, while the character education program is organized at the district level and implemented countywide, implementation varies school by school. The project evaluator worked with Carroll County program managers to design an appropriate implementation assessment. The distribution of schools according to level of implementation is shown below.

The 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 education initiatives.

### 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    |

## Improving Student Achievement and Behavior

The Maryland Partnerships in Character Education grant proposal identified one project objective involving measures of student achievement and behavior: 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. Displayed below is the performance on these measures of Carroll County schools implementing the modified Lickona approach.

### Performance of Participating Carroll County Schools

| 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%               |

## Increasing Parent and Community Involvement

The Maryland Partnerships in Character Education grant proposal identified one project objective involving parents and the community: Parents and other community members will become more active participants as evidenced through volunteer activities and mentoring roles. Displayed below is the performance on these measures of Carroll County schools implementing the modified Lickona approach.

### Performance of Participating Carroll County Schools

| 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%              |



## Performance by Level of Implementation

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 Assessment in math and reading.

Performance did not move in the expected directions in 2005-2006. 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.

### Modified Lickona 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<br>(8)      | 3.8*<br>(8)   | 95.2<br>(8)     | 97.6<br>(8)    | 1.26<br>(3)   | 77.3<br>(8)           | 82.2<br>(8)              |
| Medium                  | 17.5<br>(19)    | 7.6<br>(19)   | 94.8<br>(19)    | 98.3<br>(19)   | 3.62<br>(4)   | 73.5<br>(19)          | 79.4<br>(19)             |
| High                    | 3.0<br>(8)      | 1.9*<br>(8)   | 95.6<br>(8)     | 98.6<br>(8)    | 0.63<br>(1)   | 81.7<br>(8)           | 85.0<br>(8)              |

\* $p < .15$

### Modified Lickona 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<br>(7)      | 2.8<br>(7)    | 96.0<br>(7)     | 96.1<br>(7)    | 0.57<br>(1)   | 85.3<br>(7)           | 78.1<br>(7)              |
| Medium                  | 25.0<br>(11)    | 10.0<br>(11)  | 94.5<br>(11)    | 92.3<br>(11)   | 4.62<br>(3)   | 84.8<br>(11)          | 84.5<br>(10)             |
| High                    | 8.5<br>(7)      | 5.2<br>(7)    | 95.6<br>(7)     | 95.4<br>(7)    | 1.04<br>(2)   | 77.7<br>(7)           | 79.7<br>(7)              |

( ) Number of Schools

## Character Counts! Mid-Shore in Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot counties

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 distribution of schools according to level of implementation is shown below.

The project evaluator worked with Character Counts! Mid-Shore program managers to design an appropriate implementation assessment. The assessment included items on the incorporation of the "6 Pillars of Character," 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.



## 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    |

## Improving Student Achievement and Behavior

The Maryland Partnerships in Character Education grant proposal identified one project objective involving measures of student achievement and behavior: 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. Displayed below is the performance on these measures of schools implementing the Character Counts! Mid-Shore approach.

### Performance of Participating Character Counts! Mid-Shore Schools

| Performance Measure   | Target | Actual Performance |
|---|--------|--------------------|
| Percentage of schools demonstrating an increase in attendance rates     | 100%   | 62.5%              |
| Percentage of schools demonstrating a decrease in office referral rates | 100%   | 59.0%              |
| Percentage of schools demonstrating a decrease in suspension rates      | 100%   | 47.9%              |
| Percentage of schools demonstrating an increase in honor roll rates     | 100%   | 61.5%              |

## Increasing Parent and Community Involvement

The Maryland Partnerships in Character Education grant proposal identified one project objective involving parents and the community: Parents and other community members will become more active participants as evidenced through volunteer activities and mentoring roles. Displayed below is the performance on these measures of schools implementing the Character Counts! Mid-Shore approach.

### Performance of Participating Character Counts! Mid-Shore Schools

| 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%              |
| Percentage of schools demonstrating an increase in the number of visits by parents and other adults mentoring at school    | 100%   | 26.7%              |



## Performance by Level of Implementation

In 2004-2005, 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. In 2005-2006, performance outcomes continued to improve, except for promotion rates.

### 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**<br>(10)  | 17.2**<br>(10) | 93.1*<br>(10)   | 95.6<br>(10)   | 4.17<br>(4)   | 51.0*<br>(10)         | 61.3*<br>(10)            |
| Medium                  | 10.2<br>(23)    | 5.8<br>(23)    | 94.1<br>(23)    | 96.5<br>(23)   | 2.77<br>(3)   | 70.9<br>(23)          | 75.3<br>(23)             |
| High                    | 4.2**<br>(11)   | 3.0**<br>(11)  | 94.8*<br>(11)   | 96.7<br>(11)   | 0.93<br>(1)   | 70.9*<br>(11)         | 78.3*<br>(11)            |

\* $p < .01$

\*\* $p < .001$

### 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*<br>(9)    | 10.5*<br>(9)  | 94.8<br>(9)     | 98.0<br>(9)    | 2.69<br>(2)   | 74.1<br>(9)           | 67.9*<br>(9)             |
| Medium                  | 13.4<br>(20)    | 7.7<br>(20)   | 94.2<br>(20)    | 97.0<br>(20)   | 2.93<br>(4)   | 72.2<br>(20)          | 75.1<br>(20)             |
| High                    | 8.1*<br>(11)    | 4.9*<br>(11)  | 95.3<br>(11)    | 96.7<br>(11)   | 1.47<br>(1)   | 74.3<br>(11)          | 76.8*<br>(11)            |

\* $p < .15$

( ) Number of Schools

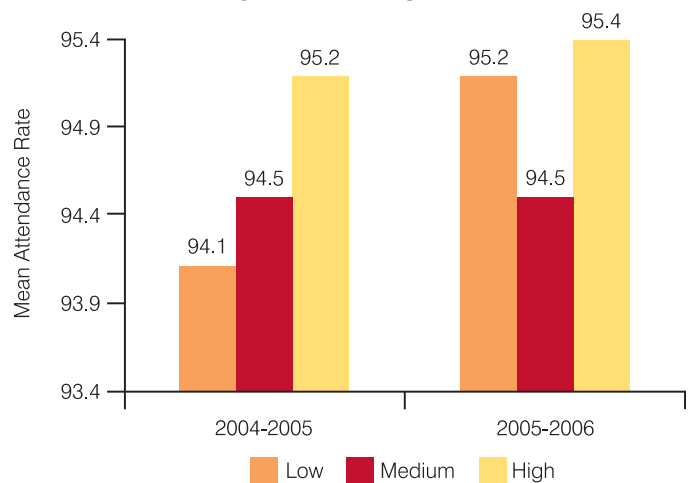


# WHAT PROGRESS WAS MADE ACROSS ALL PROGRAMS?

## Improved Attendance

Two-thirds of the participating schools, or 67 of 99 schools (67.7%), experienced an increase in attendance. On average, participating schools improved attendance by .19 percentage points. 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 .06 percentage points. Thus, the schools participating in the grant outperformed the state overall in terms of attendance.

**Attendance Rates  
by Level of Implementation**



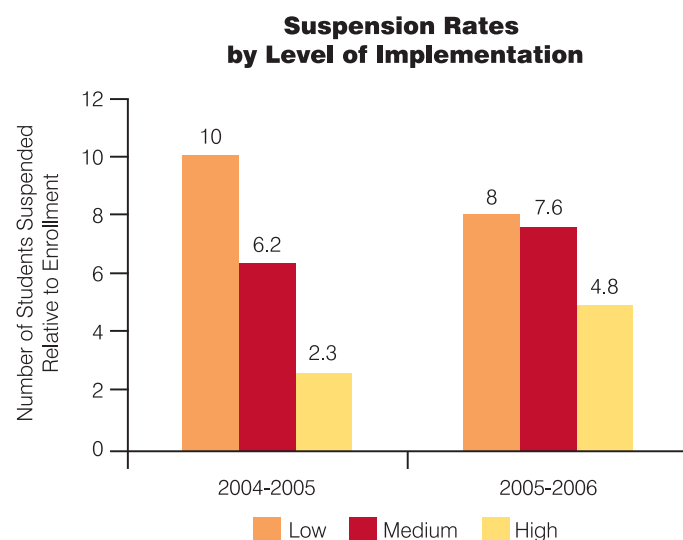


## Higher Reading and Math Achievement

In 2004-2005, the implementation of character education had a moderate effect on math proficiency and a large effect on reading proficiency. The percentage of students scoring at or above proficient in math in school with low levels of character education fell 11.27 percentage points lower, on average, than in schools with high levels of programming. Similarly, average reading proficiency rates differed by 9.24 percentage points when comparing low- and high-implementation schools. In 2005-2006, the size of the effect of character education programming was smaller; the differences between low- and high-implementation schools were not statistically significant.

## Suspension Rates

Nearly half of the 100 schools with complete data, 43 (43%), did decrease suspension rates. Overall, however, there was a slight increase in suspension rates—the average increase was .0091 percentage points.



Note — Decreasing suspension rates indicate improvement.

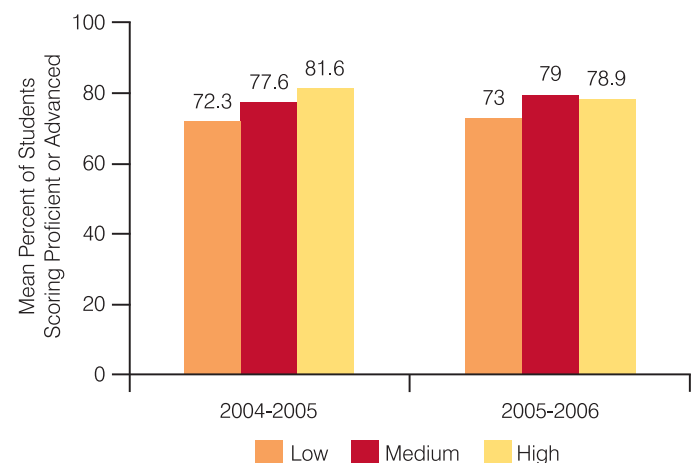
## Higher Honor Roll Rates

Of the 22 schools with complete data, 17 (77.3%) increased their honor roll rates. Overall, the 22 schools showed an increase in honor roll rates. The average increase was .24 percentage points.

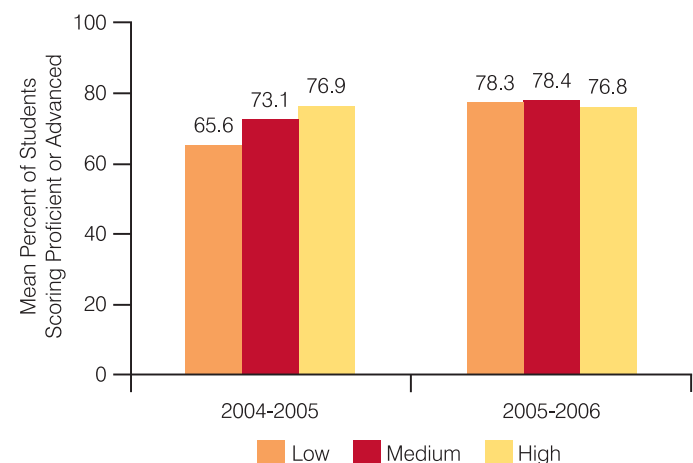
## Increased Parent and Community Involvement

Three-quarters of the schools with complete data, or 54 of 72 schools (75%), showed increases in adult volunteering. On average, participating schools increased the annual number of visits by adult volunteers by 171 visits. Of the 77 schools with complete data, 18 or 23.4% showed increases in adult mentoring. On average participating schools increased the annual number of visits by adult mentors by three visits.

## Reading Proficiency Rates by Level of Implementation



## Math Proficiency Rates by Level of Implementation





## ARE THE PROGRAMS EFFECTIVE?

The largest effect sizes were found 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.

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 implementing it. A violence prevention curriculum such as Second Step® is suitable only 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.



## Acknowledgements

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Growing Character, Cultivating Achievement:  
Evaluation results from the Maryland Partnerships  
in Character Education grant

December 2007

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