

## **Introduction**

In 2006, the Tulare County Office of Education was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Education to conduct a study to measure the effectiveness of character education in schools. Tulare County's CHARACTER COUNTS! PCEP Study has met the GPRA Federal Research Requirement:

<sup>1</sup>GPRA Measure – *Government Performance and Results Act of 1993*

- ✓ Researched based – quasi-experimental study with treatment and control groups
- ✓ Pre/post assessments that are proven to be scientifically valid and reliable (this step involved conducting a psychometric analysis to categorize question items into subscales )
- ✓ Evaluation will utilize formative and summative data from subscales
- ✓ This GPRA Measure will provide statistically significant reporting for research level purposes

Program and comparison schools were matched according to enrollment, achievement test scores, socioeconomic status, and behavioral data (e.g., truancy, suspensions, expulsions).

Evaluation data were collected from several sources, including student surveys, teacher/staff surveys, site visits, and district data such as attendance, disciplinary infractions, and achievement test scores.

This brief report describes the results of data collected through the student survey, as well as highlights from a site visit to one of the program elementary schools.

## **Methods**

The Student Report Card Survey has been administered to all students in grades 6-12 at both program and comparison schools for the past four years. The survey contains questions which address student attitudes, values, and behaviors, and includes the following nine subscales, each of which is comprised of between two and 12 survey items:

- ✓ Ethical Attitudes (e.g., “it’s not worth it to lie or cheat”, “people should play by the rules”)
- ✓ Anti-Social Attitudes (e.g., “sometimes a person has to lie or cheat to succeed”)
- ✓ Access to Drugs and Alcohol (e.g., “if I wanted to, I could get drugs”)
- ✓ Pro-social Values (e.g., being charitable, respectful)
- ✓ Superficial Values (e.g., being wealthy, famous)
- ✓ Religious Values (e.g., “living up to the standards of my religion is important”)
- ✓ Non-confrontational Anti-Social Behaviors (e.g., lying, cheating)
- ✓ Hurtful Anti-Social Behaviors (e.g., stealing, bullying)
- ✓ Suffered Injustice (e.g., been bullied by others)

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<sup>1</sup> First study of this federal reporting requirement level for CC!  
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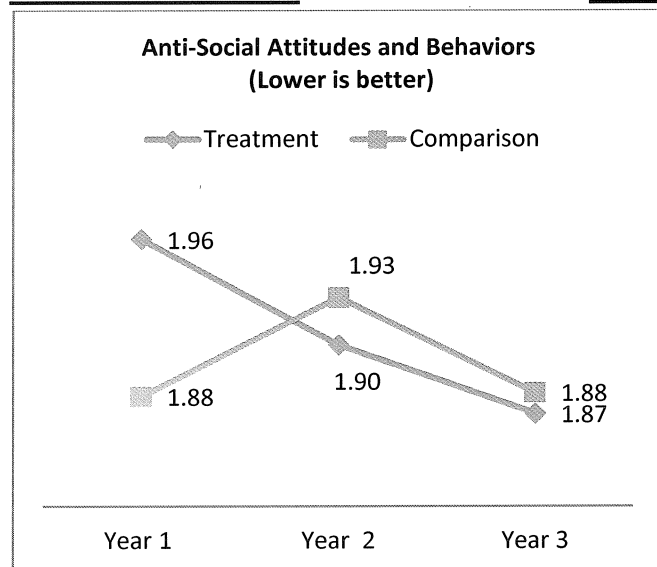
Grant implementation of CHARACTER COUNTS! began during the 2007-08 school year. The Student Report Card Survey was administered prior to program implementation that year, providing a baseline measure of student attitudes, values, and self-reported behavior. The survey was administered in each successive year as well. In this report, we compare data from baseline (2007-08), Year 2 (2008-09) and Year 3 (2009-10) for program and comparison schools.<sup>2</sup>

### **Subscale Results**

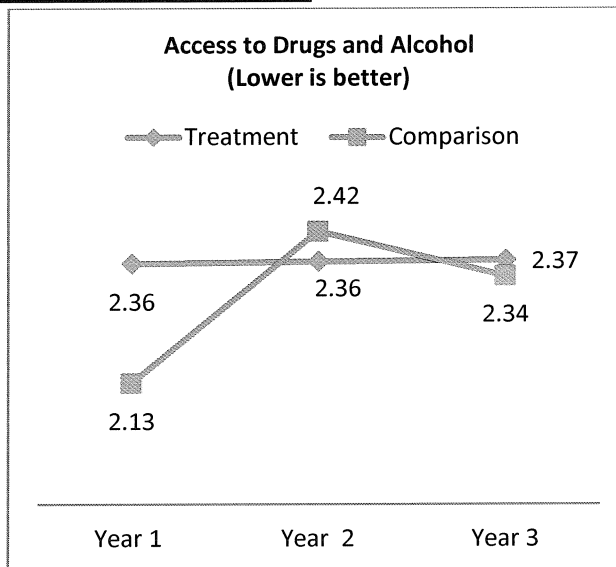
In order to assess change in student attitudes, values, and behaviors over time, a factorial ANOVA was conducted to examine differences in program and comparison schools over time for each of the nine subscales listed above. Statistically significant differences were detected on seven of the nine subscales.<sup>3</sup> The subscales that did not yield statistically significant differences between groups were “Ethical Attitudes and Behaviors” and “Suffered Injustice”.

The graphs below illustrate change over time for program and comparison schools on the 7 significant subscales:

#### **Anti-Social Attitudes**



#### **Access to Drugs and Alcohol**



### **Discussion for Anti-Social Attitudes/ Access to Drugs and Alcohol:**

As illustrated above, the program schools showed decreased agreement with antisocial attitudes over time as compared to minimal change in the comparison group from year one to year three. When asked about access to

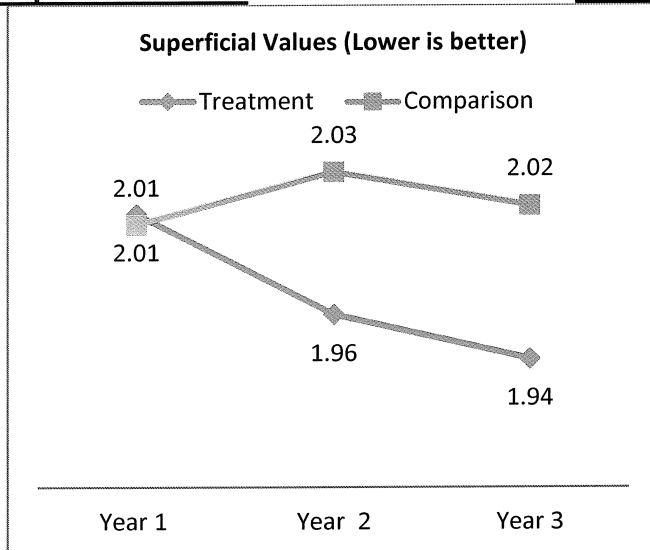
<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that three program schools and three comparison schools were eliminated from the analysis due to staff reporting fairly high levels of Character Counts! implementation (not using grant funds) prior to baseline collection.

<sup>3</sup> Statistically significant can be explained by saying: this outcome did not occur by chance; there was a reason (treatment) for the change.

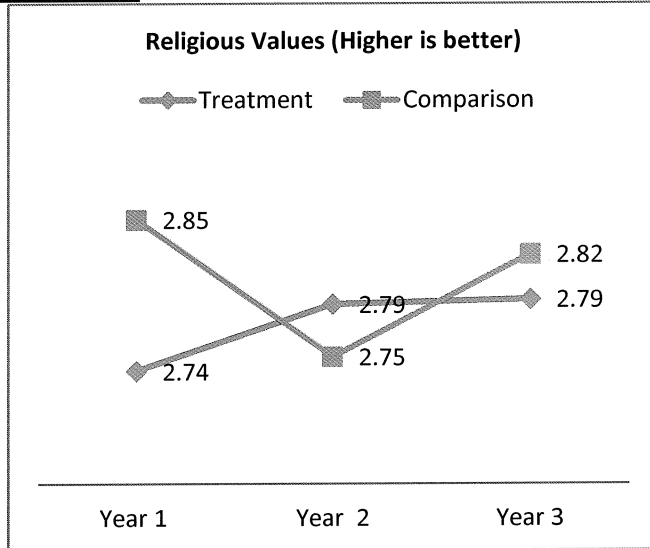
**Discussion for Anti-Social Attitudes/ Access to Drugs and Alcohol:**

As illustrated above, the program schools showed decreased agreement with antisocial attitudes over time as compared to minimal change in the comparison group from year one to year three. When asked about access to drugs and alcohol, students in the treatment group remained stable and comparison schools increased access over time.

**Superficial Values**



**Religious Values**

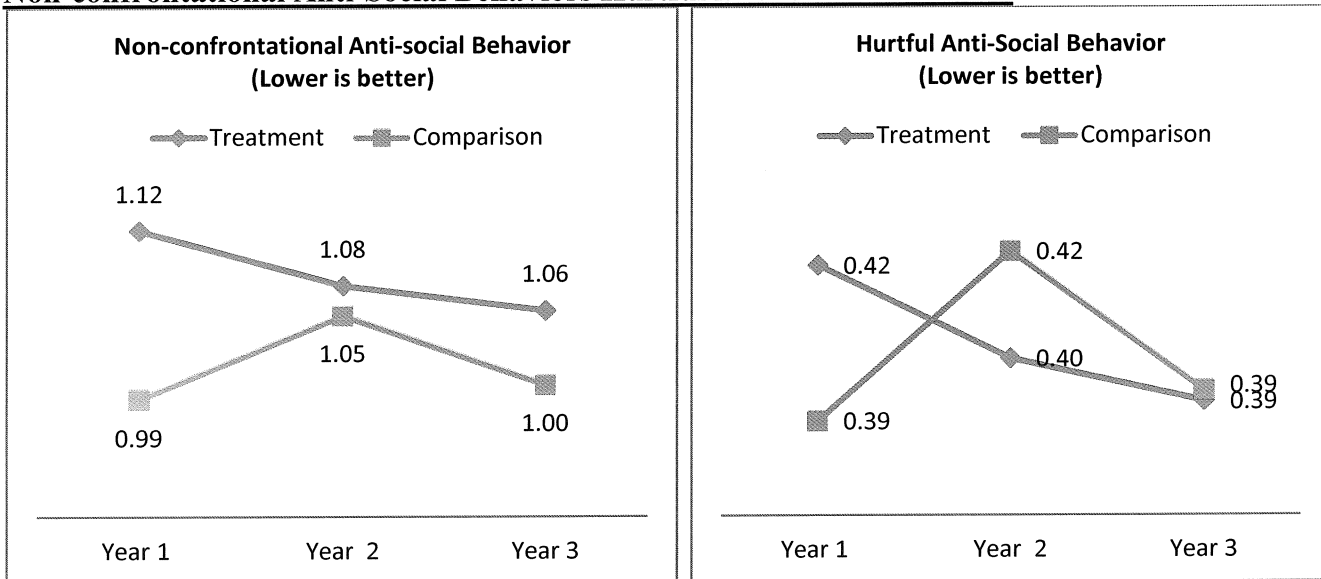


**Discussion for Superficial / Religious Values:**

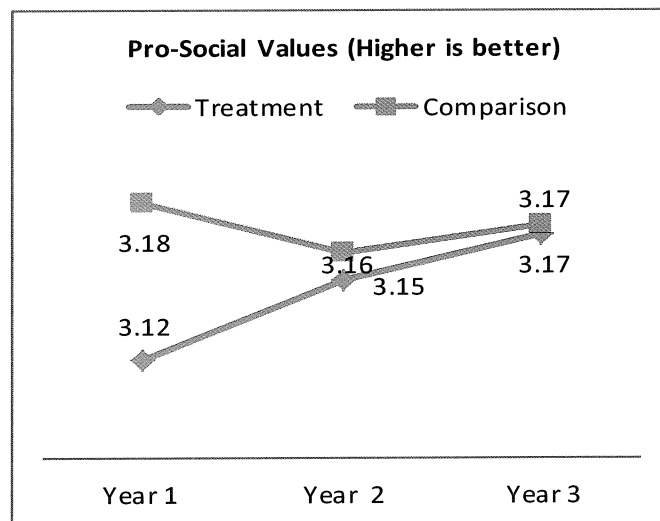
Students in the program schools showed a decrease in superficial values, whereas comparison schools reported increased superficial values over the course of the grant. For religious values, program schools remained relatively stable and comparison schools dipped in year two. <sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> CC! remains politically and religiously neutral.  
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### Non-confrontational Anti-Social Behaviors Hurtful Anti-Social Behaviors



### Pro-social Values



**Discussion:** Students in program schools reported decreased non-confrontational and hurtful anti-social behaviors over the course of the grant. Comparison schools showed increases from year one to year two on these subscales. Finally, program schools showed increases in pro-social behaviors.

### **Individual Results with Percentage Change Highlights**

While statistical significance is one important piece of establishing differences between groups, it can also be worthwhile to examine descriptive data for individual survey items. The table below shows the results from a *sampling* of items from the Student Report Card Survey.

<b>Anti-social Attitudes and Behaviors Scale Items (lower is better)</b>	<b>Program Schools</b>		<b>Comparison Schools</b>		<b>Program Schools</b>	<b>Comparison Schools</b>
	<b>% Agreement at Baseline (n = 2821)</b>	<b>% Agreement Year 3 (n = 2955)</b>	<b>% Agreement at Baseline (n = 1277)</b>	<b>% Agreement Year 3 (n = 1516)</b>	<b>% Change from Baseline to Year 3</b>	<b>% Change from Baseline to Year 3</b>
In the real world, successful people do what they have to do to win, even if other people consider it cheating	56.7%	46.8%	50.3%	44.5%	17.5%	11.5%
A person has to lie or cheat sometimes in order in order to succeed.	37.4%	29.9%	31.4%	28.2%	20%	10%
It's sometimes OK to hit or threaten a person who makes me very angry.	26.6%	22.9%	22.9%	22.9%	13.9%	0%
People who are willing to lie, cheat, or break the rules are more likely to succeed than people who are not.	17.1%	15.5%	16.9%	17.0%	9.4%	-0.6%
In sports, if you're not cheating, you're not trying hard enough.	12.3%	10.1%	12.3%	14.1%	17.9%	-14.6%

<b>Superficial Behaviors Scale Items (lower is better)</b>	<b>Program Schools</b>		<b>Comparison Schools</b>		<b>Program Schools</b>	<b>Comparison Schools</b>
	<b>% Essential or Very Important Baseline (n =3982)</b>	<b>% Essential or Very Important Year 3 (n =4227)</b>	<b>% Change from Baseline to Year 3</b>	<b>% Change from Baseline to Year 3</b>	<b>% Change from Baseline to Year 3</b>	<b>% Change from Baseline to Year 3</b>
Being physically attractive	41.7%	35.9%	42.7%	42.7%	13.9%	0%
Being popular	16.9%	14.1%	17.6%	17.7%	16.6%	-0.6%
Being famous	18.1%	16.8%	19.3%	20.3%	7.2%	-5.2%

<b>Hurtful Anti-social Behavior Scale Items (lower is better)</b> <u><b>In the past year</b></u>	<b>Program Schools</b>		<b>Comparison Schools</b>		<b>Program Schools</b>	<b>Comparison Schools</b>
	<b>% One or More Times at Baseline (n =4481)</b>	<b>% One or More Times at Year 3 (n =5033 )</b>	<b>% One or More Times at Baseline (n =2100 )</b>	<b>% One or More Times at Year 3 (n = 2621)</b>	<b>% Change from Baseline to Year 3</b>	<b>% Change from Baseline to Year 3</b>
Stole something from a friend	17.8%	16.2%	15.9%	16.9%	8.9%	-6.3%
Stole something from a store	28.0%	26.4%	25.4%	26.1%	5.7%	-2.8%

<b>Pro-Social Values Scale Items (higher is better)</b>	<b>Program Schools</b>		<b>Comparison Schools</b>		<b>Program Schools</b>	<b>Comparison Schools</b>
	<b>% Essential or Very Important Baseline (n =3756)</b>	<b>% Essential or Very Important Year 3 (n =4024)</b>	<b>% Essential or Very Important Baseline (n=1713)</b>	<b>% Essential or Very Important Year 3 (n =2058)</b>	<b>% Change from Baseline to Year 3</b>	<b>% Change from Baseline to Year 3</b>
Being charitable	56.5%	60.2%	59.1%	59.4%	6.5%	0.5%
Helping others	74.0%	77.1%	77.8%	77.7%	4.2%	-0.13%
Having good moral character	81.9%	83.5%	84.1%	84.0%	1.9%	-0.12%
Treating others with respect	86.3%	87.7%	88.1%	87.8%	1.6%	-0.34%
Having trusting personal relationships	86.5%	87.7%	89.8%	87.5%	1.4%	-2.6%