Reshaping California's Character Education Code

Ian Hill, Jennifer Seuss, Alicia Sherman, Dinesa Thomas, Bennie Tinson, and Robin Wilson

April 2002

Pepperdine University
School of Public Policy

Contents

Executive Summary v

1. Introduction 10

2. What is Character Education? 10
   Theoretical Foundation for Character Education 11
   Character Education Pilot Programs 12

3. Is Character Education Needed? 12
   A Look at Student Behavior 15
   DARE-The Nation's Response to Drugs, Gangs, and Violence 18
   The Shortcomings of DARE 19

4. Laws Supporting Character Education 22
   The President's Plan 23
   Character and California 24
   Is Education Code Section 233.5 Clear? 26
   What Are Other States Doing? 27

5. Issues and Debates 29
   Popular Opposition to Character Education 29
   Popular Support for Character Education 31

6. Constructing a Plan of Action 32
   Options 32
      Option 1: Status Quo 32
      Option 2: Amend Section 233.5 32
      Option 3: Encourage Parental Involvement 33
      Option 4: Incorporate Into Teacher Credentialing 34
   Choosing Options That Work 34
      Comprehensive Approach 35
      Parental Involvement 35
      School Violence and Discipline Issues 35
      Incorporated Into Lessons 35
      Separation Between Church and State 36
      Political Feasibility 36
   Recommendations 36
      Why Other Options Did Not Work 36

7. The Road to Implementation 38
   Obstacles to Successful Implementation 40

8. Conclusion 41

References and Bibliography 42

Appendix 47

Appendix 1: Handbook Adopted by California State Board of Education 47
Appendix 2: The 17 DARE Lessons 48
Appendix 3: Problems in Schools 49
Appendix 4: Classical Thoughts on Character Education 49
Appendix 5: Character Education In American Public Schools 52

About the Authors 58

Executive Summary

On April 20, 1999 two white teenage males entered their suburban high school armed with shotguns and opened fire on their classmates. The resulting massacre at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado shocked the nation, and awakened America to the terrible truth that its public schools were no longer safe havens for children. Metal detectors, security guards, mandatory see-through backpacks, and a variety of other measures long thought to be characteristics of inner city schools have been implemented across the country in order prevent a repeat of Columbine. Students' shooting their classmates however is only one of a myriad number of serious problems within the public school system today. Teen pregnancy, drug use, and bullying all promote an atmosphere of fear, apprehension, and paranoia that hinders the learning process for many schoolchildren. Some seek to attribute the deteriorating social environment in schools to the high amount of sex and violence on television, in video games, and in movies. Others place the blame on domestic upheaval, the high divorce rate, and the explosion in the number of single-parent homes. The overarching cause for the present problems in our schools today however is a basic lack of proper character. Students are less likely to understand the value of being honest, trustworthy, loyal, and compassionate citizens today than at any other point in our nation's history. In other words, there is a severe lack of character education in America's homes and schools today, and the results appear daily in newspapers and on television.

The purpose of this paper is threefold. First, the paper defines character education, examines its history and theoretical foundation, details the necessity of character education in light of the poor performance of programs currently in use, highlights legislation from the Federal Government and California legislature supporting character education, and notes the arguments on both sides of the character education debate. Second, the authors of this paper discuss several options available to State policy makers for providing character education in all of California's public schools, and provides a recommendation on the best course of action. Finally, this paper serves to fulfill the authors' capstone requirement for Pepperdine University's School of Public Policy.

Individuals and organizations define character education in a variety of ways. Dr. Thomas Lickona defines character education as "the deliberate effort to develop virtues that are good for the individual and good for society." According to the

Michigan Character Counts program, “Character education is the process of learning common attitudes, beliefs and behaviors that are important for people to have as responsible citizens.” A description of character education from the University of Illinois states that character education “is about celebrating what's right with young people while enabling them to develop knowledge and life skills for enhancing ethical and responsible behavior. [1]

Scholarly debates on character formation among philosophers, educators and the public extend as far back as Aristotle’s Nichomacean Ethics. The Founders of the United States asserted that education, including character education, was crucial to the maintenance of a democratic society. Throughout the history of public education, character and common values were an integral part of the curriculum. By the 1960’s, however, a debate surfaced regarding the consequence of values and moral instruction in schools. The diversity of American lifestyles, religious practices and cultures fueled the debate and resulting in values clarification models largely replacing character education in public schools programs. In the 1980’s a renewed interest in character education ignited a new debate; could the variety of social problems experienced by children be diminished if character education were reinstated as through character education as apart of the curriculum?

The most popular program in America today is the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program (DARE). Introduced in 1983 by the Los Angeles Police Department the purpose of DARE was to combat drug use in Los Angeles schools. Since its inception DARE has become a nationally recognized program with than 80 percent of America’s school districts using the DARE program. Despite its popularity, research on the program shows that DARE fails to have a significant impact on children's drug use. As a result, DARE is being rapidly being discontinued in many schools throughout California and the nation in favor of character education programs which tackle a wide variety of issues facing school children.

DARE’s inability to reduce drug use levels in schools, its one-issue focus, and the short time students are exposed to the program have led many educators and parents to return to character education. Character education, also called moral education, life skills training or conflict resolution, involves assisting students to make informed and responsible choices by helping students comprehend and use commonly used ethical values. These values vary depending on the character

---

[1] “Definitions of Character Education,” Indiana Clearinghouse for Citizenship and Character Education. Internet. eric.indiana.edu/chared/definitions.html, April 6, 2002.

education program, but generally include honesty, respect, loyalty, responsibility, and fairness.

The Federal Government has stepped forward to encourage nationwide character education. George W. Bush made character education an issue during his campaign for the Presidency, bringing national attention to the general lack of character in America. President George W. Bush believes character education is necessary in today's public schools because, "parents have a tough battle in America today. Their children sometimes receive conflicting messages. What public education ought to do is stand on the side of parents. Values like caring, justice and fairness, respect for others, responsibility, and trustworthiness are universally agreed upon. There is no substitute for teaching our children basic values and positive behavior. What children learn in the classroom inevitably shapes their character and impacts their moral development." [2] Upon entering office, President Bush followed through on his campaign promise to bring character back to America. Creating the Office of Faith Based Initiatives and introduction of legislation addressing the need for character education in the nation's public schools are a couple examples of his interest on character.

In addition, President Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 on January 8, 2002. This bill is commonly referred to as House Resolution 1 (H.R. 1) and is the cornerstone of the administration's education policy. H.R. 1 makes character education a priority by providing the U.S. Department of Education with $25 million for character education programs in fiscal year 2002.

The State of California, following the lead of the federal government, passed its own legislation regarding character education in 1994. California Education Code, Section 233.5, formerly Section 44806, is the section on the instruction of pupils concerning morals, manners, and citizenship. It states that each teacher shall endeavor to instruct students on elements of character and citizenship. Each teacher is also encouraged to create and foster an environment that encourages pupils to realize their full potential, that is free from discriminatory attitudes, practices, events, or activities and that attempts to prevent acts of hate violence.

Additionally, Education Code Section 44790 Chapter 3.8 reveals the rationale used by the Legislature in passing character education legislation. It reads, "The legislature finds and declares that there is a compelling need to promote the development and implementation of effective educational programs in ethics and civic values in California schools in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12.

---

[2] http://edworkforce.house.gov/edwatch, April 19, 2001.

To address the growing social problems of California's students we recommend California amend the language of section 233.5 of the education code to clarify and strengthen the implementation of character education in public schools. We have selected amending the language of section 223.5 because by amending the language the state could address the shortfalls that the section currently possesses. Since the implementation of character education is currently present in the education code, it is more feasible to first attempt to make changes to the code before implementing character education through a new section of the education code.

To implement the recommendation effectively legislation must be passed. The language of Education Code 233.5 must be uniformly understood to mean all teachers must teach character education in California public schools. The California State Assembly must initiate a bill to change the phrase "shall endeavor" to "must instruct." Additionally, a specific program/curriculum must be named as the official State of California Character Education program to ensure that all students receive a comparable education in this subject area. In order for character education to become part of the California curriculum, the State Board of Education must be persuaded to add character education to the curriculum frameworks. The curriculum frameworks are the blueprint for implementing grade level content standards adopted by the California State Board of Education. Frameworks are developed by the Curriculum Development and Supplemental Materials Commission, which also reviews and recommends textbooks and other instructional materials to be adopted by the State Board.

In conclusion, the programs currently used to address the vast array of social problems common to youth are not providing the results necessary. DARE, championed by educators and law enforcement personnel for over two decades as a cure for drug use in the public schools, is being discredited as a viable method for combating drugs in California schools. In addition, few programs exist that address the wide range issues affecting school children today such as high drop-out rates, low standardized test scores, rising levels of school violence, and teen pregnancy. After an exhaustive search to find a remedy for these social ills parents, teachers, school administrators, and politicians are heralding the rediscovery of character education. In 1994, the California Legislature addressed the issue of character education by passing a bill that placed Section 233.5 in the Education Code. Although present in the Education Code, the implementation of character education is feeble-at best-as the section is currently written. The vague language in the section contributes to this problem. If all California schoolchildren are to benefit from the lessons taught through character education, Section 233.5 must be amended to include stronger language mandating that public school

teachers instruct students in character education. In addition, fears that character education violates separation of church and state doctrine need to be set aside, and parents must be encouraged to participate in the inculcation of positive character traits in their children. Implementation of these recommendations will result in a safer and more civil learning environment for California's school children and teachers.

1. Introduction

Scholarly debates on character formation among philosophers, educators and the public extend as far back as Aristotle's Nichomacean Ethics. The Founders of the United States asserted that education, including character education, was crucial to the maintenance of a democratic society. Throughout the history of public education, character and common values were an integral part of the curriculum. By the 1960's, however, a debate surfaced regarding the consequence of values and moral instruction in schools. The diversity of American lifestyles, religious practices and cultures fueled the debate resulting in values clarification models largely replacing character education in public schools. In the 1980's a renewed interest in character education ignited a new debate; could the variety of social problems experienced by children be diminished if character education were reinstated as apart of the curriculum?

There has been a movement at the state and national level to address the character education question. In 1994, the California Legislature passed a law that placed character education in the California Education Code. Section 233.5 states that "each teacher shall endeavor to impress upon students" the principles outlined in the Code. Although the California Education Code contains a section regarding character education, the authors of this paper feel that it is weak, vague and leaves room for gross interpretation.

Nationally, President George W. Bush-through his education plan- highlights the need for character education in America's public schools. In House Resolution 1 (H.R. 1) President Bush prioritizes character education by providing the U.S. Department of Education with $25 million to fund character programs in schools. This is a $15.7 million increase. Additionally, the President has streamlined the process by which states undergo to receive grants to operate character education programs.

As the national debate surrounding character education continues to grow and take shape we feel it is imperative that action taken-be they on the state or national stage-possess the strength and language necessary to address the issues driving the debate. It is the aim of the authors to (1) to examine history of character education and its' need in public schools, (2) to analyze the California Education Code Section 233.5 and lastly (3) to provide recommendations and an implementation plan for California. This paper will primarily examine the debate

surrounding character education and the Federal and State education plans currently in place. This paper is an effort to examine the policy alternatives available to the State of California in regards to public education and character curriculum. The goal of this paper is to provide policy recommendations that can be advocated at the State level to clarify and codify character education policy and code. The paper also serves to fulfill the authors' Capstone requirement for Pepperdine University School of Public Policy.

2. What is Character Education?

Character education has been defined in a variety of ways by a wide range of individuals and organizations. Dr. Thomas Lickona defines character education as "the deliberate effort to develop virtues that are good for the individual and good for society." According to the Michigan Character Counts program "character education is the process of learning common attitudes, beliefs and behaviors that are important for people to have as responsible citizens." A description of character education from the University of Illinois states that character education "is about celebrating what's right with young people while enabling them to develop knowledge and life skills for enhancing ethical and responsible behavior.

Theoretical Foundation for Character Education

Underlying character education is a theory from developmental psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg, who through a series of studies was able to demonstrate that people advance in their moral reasoning through a series of six identifiable stages divided into three levels. Kohlberg's "Stages of Moral Development" are broken down in the Table 1.

The first level of moral thinking is usually found at the elementary school level. Children behave according to "socially acceptable norms" because they are instructed to do so by an authority figure such as a parent or teacher. Through the threat or application of punishment, the child is compelled to obey. The second stage of this same level is "characterized by the view that right behavior means acting in one's own best interest."

Table 1

Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development

Level	Stage	Social Orientation
Pre-Conventional	1	Obedience and Punishment
	2	Individualism, Instrumentalism and Exchange
Conventional	3	"Good Boy, Good Girl"
	4	Law and Order
Post Conventional	5	Social Contract
	6	Principled Conscience

SOURCE: Robert N. Barger. *A Summary Of Lawrence Kohlberg's Stages Of Moral Development*, Notre Dame, IN, 2000, http://www.nd.edu/~rbarger/kohlberg.html.

The second level of moral thinking, or conventional level, is first distinguished (Stage 3) by an attitude which seeks to gain the approval of others. In stage 4 the individual is oriented to abiding by the law and "responding to the obligations of duty."

Most adults do not reach the final level of moral development, Kohlberg believed. Stage 5 involves an understanding of "social mutuality" and a genuine concern for the welfare of others. The final stage is based on respect for universal principle and the demands of individual conscience (Stage 6). While believing Stage 6 existed and having a few possible candidates for it, Kohlberg could never find enough subjects to truly define it much less observe an individual's progression to it.

According to Kohlberg, people advance through each level one step at a time, never jumping over a stage. It is then important to present individuals with moral dilemmas only one step above their own in order to encourage them to advance in that direction, and to see the rational behind a "higher stage" of morality and encourage them along that path. Kohlberg saw this as one of the ways that moral development can be promoted through formal education and moral development occurs primarily through social interaction.

Character Education Pilot Programs

DARE's inability to reduce drug use levels in schools, its one-issue focus, and the short time students are exposed to the program have led many educators and parents to return to character education. Character education, also called moral education, life skills training or conflict resolution, involves assisting students to make informed and responsible choices by helping students comprehend and use

commonly used ethical values. These values vary depending on the character education program, but generally include honesty, respect, loyalty, responsibility, and fairness.

Several programs highlight the various ways that character education is being implemented in public schools. The **Heartwood Institute**, a non-profit educational organization offers character education curriculums from the pre-K through elementary levels. Children learn to understand seven universal attributes: courage, loyalty, justice, respect, hope, honesty, and love. These seven virtues are incorporated into stories that children read and then discuss with the teacher who then elaborates on the attribute(s) embedded within each tale. Heartwood includes numerous activity ideas for students to engage in both inside the classroom and at home. A pilot program using the Heartwood curriculum is currently being tested at an elementary school in Hawaii.

The **Character Counts** coalition centers its program on "Six Pillars of Character." These pillars are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. Character Counts is currently the largest character education initiative in the country, comprised of numerous national educational organizations, youth development and service organizations, cities and communities, schools, and community organizations. Character Counts is currently in use in Sacramento, California as apart of the California Partnership for Character Education Pilot Program. [3] The philosophy of the coalition is that there are values that are intrinsic to all despite diverse beliefs and backgrounds.

The results of several studies done on the Character Counts program are being revealed to the public. A five-year study started in 1997-98 in South Dakota shows that Character Counts has cut crime and drug use drastically from 1998 to 2000. Using extensive questionnaires covering demographics, attitudes, and behaviors, researchers at South Dakota State University found that Character Counts students who said they had:

- Broken into another's property declined 50 percent.
- Used a fake ID dropped 56 percent.
- Taken something without paying dropped 46 percent.
- Consumed alcoholic beverages fell 31 percent.
- Used illegal drugs declined 32 percent.

---

[3] California Department of Education. Character Education. Oct. 17, 2000.

- Vandalized property dropped 46 percent.
- Resulted to physical force against someone who insulted them fell 33 percent.
- In addition to these improvements, students who said they:
- Cheated on an exam declined by 30 percent.
- Received detention or suspension fell 28 percent.
- Missed class without a legitimate excuse declined 39 percent.
- Teased someone because of race or ethnicity dropped 45 percent.

South Dakota is not the only location seeing positive results from the Character Counts initiative. In Tulare, California, a principal reported that among his 300 sixth grade students, suspensions fell by 30 percent during the first six months of the 1999 school year, and by 22 percent for the entire year. In Easton, Maryland, 115 incidents of classroom disruption were reported at Moton Elementary School in 1997. The following year the Character Counts program began, and the number of classroom disruptions fell to 36. At North Ridge Elementary School in Lubbock, Texas, teachers issued 425 disciplinary referrals to the assistant principal the year before Character Counts classes started. That number plummeted to 220 the first year of the program, which is a 48 percent decrease. [4]

A final example of a character education program currently being used in schools is the **Giraffe Project**. The Giraffe Project curriculum is meant for students from kindergarten through twelfth grade, and encourages students to be "courageous, caring, and responsible members of the community." [5] The Giraffe Heroes program uses stories about people who have "stuck their necks out" for the common good. Students learn about the qualities those heroes possess, and why it is important to project those characteristics themselves. The program addresses violence, teen pregnancy, dropping out, and drug/alcohol abuse by giving students something to "say yes to."

The aforementioned character education programs represent a small amount of the numerous programs available nationally. We recognize that there are many other programs similar to the three mentioned which could have been highlighted in this paper.

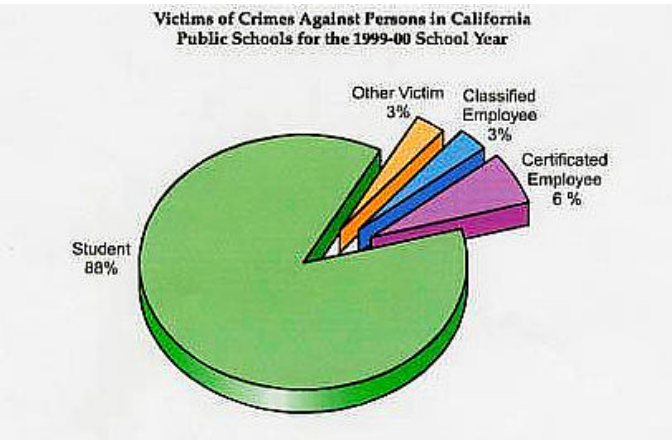
---

[4] http://www.charactercounts.org/survey-reports.htm

[5] http://www.giraffe.org/projectinfo.html

3. Is Character Education Needed?

As incidents of in-school violence become more common, and strict disciplinary techniques and increased security measures fail to control the problem, many parents, educators, politicians and social leaders are looking for reliable methods of prevention. In California, the California Safe School Assessment Project reports that 88 percent of crimes against students are committed by other students. This study and so many others in recent years provide proponents of character education with statistical evidence supporting the need for character education in public schools.



A Look at Student Behavior

The Josephson Institute of Ethics in The Ethics of American Youth: Violence and Substance Abuse: Press Release reports that "Today's teens, especially boys, have a high propensity to use violence when they are angry, they have easy access to guns, drugs, and alcohol, and a disturbing number take weapons to school." [6] This statement is supported by statistics, which the article puts forth, showing that our children are in troubling times and a change must be made in order to ensure them a better life. The institute surveyed 15,000 teenagers on a variety of topics and released the following information

---

[6] Josephson Institute of Ethics. "The Ethics of American Youth: Violence and Substance Abuse: Press Release". www.josephsoninstitute.org/Survey2000/violence2000-pressrelease.htm

- More than one in three students (39 percent of middle school students and 36 percent of high school students) says they do not feel safe at school.
- Forty-three percent of high school and 37 percent of middle school boys believe it is okay to hit or threaten a person who makes them angry. Nearly one in five (19 percent) of the girls agree.
- Sixty-nine percent of high school and 27 percent of middle school boys said they could get drugs if they wanted to.
- Nineteen percent of high school and 9 percent of middle school boys admit they were drunk at school at least once in the past year. [7]

Even though some may view the adolescent's responses as somewhat unreliable, the survey cannot be completely discounted. Evaluating the statistics of violence and discipline problems of juveniles on a national and state level is a necessary process in determining whether there the need for character education is genuine.

Many polls and surveys, including the Josephson Institute and the National High School Survey, illustrate the at-risk behaviors and potentially dangerous decisions in which teens and pre-teens engage. According to the National Center for Education Statistics: in their publication *Violence and Discipline Problems in U.S. Public Schools: 1996-97*, "Fifty-seven percent of public elementary and secondary school principals reported that one or more incidents of crime / violence that were reported to the police or other law enforcement officials had occurred in their school during the 1996-97 school year." Additionally, the report indicates that "Ten percent of all public schools experienced one or more serious violent crimes (defined as murder, rape or other type of sexual battery, suicide, physical attack or fight with a weapon, or robbery) that were reported to police or other law enforcement officials during the 1996-97 school year."

Data reveal, "Sixteen percent of public school principals considered at least one serious discipline problem (out of seventeen discipline issues that they were asked about to be a serious problem in their schools in 1996-97). The remaining schools were about equally divided between those that had minor or no discipline problems on all seventeen issues and those that reported a moderate problem on at least one of the issues forty-one percent." [8] Discipline is not only learned at schools, but also at home.

---

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] National Center for Education Statistics, "Violence and Discipline Problems in U.S. Public Schools: 1996-97". US Department of Education.

Statistics regarding violent behavior among children and teens in California do not vastly differ from the statistics at the national level. A Long Beach Press Telegram article entitled "Violent School Crime Rises" reports that "the California Safe Schools Assessment for 2000-01 showed that crimes committed against another person, property crimes and drug violations- including alcohol cases- increased statewide for the third year in a row."[9]

- The juvenile arrest rate per a 100,000 population at risk for felony offenses declined 30.3 percent since 1991.
- Since 1988, the juvenile arrest rate for property offenses has generally been two times higher than the adult arrest rate for property offenses.
- The arrest rate for felony drug offenses is three times lower for juveniles than for adults.
- The number of juvenile felony weapons arrests has increased 117.7 percent from 1988 to 1998.

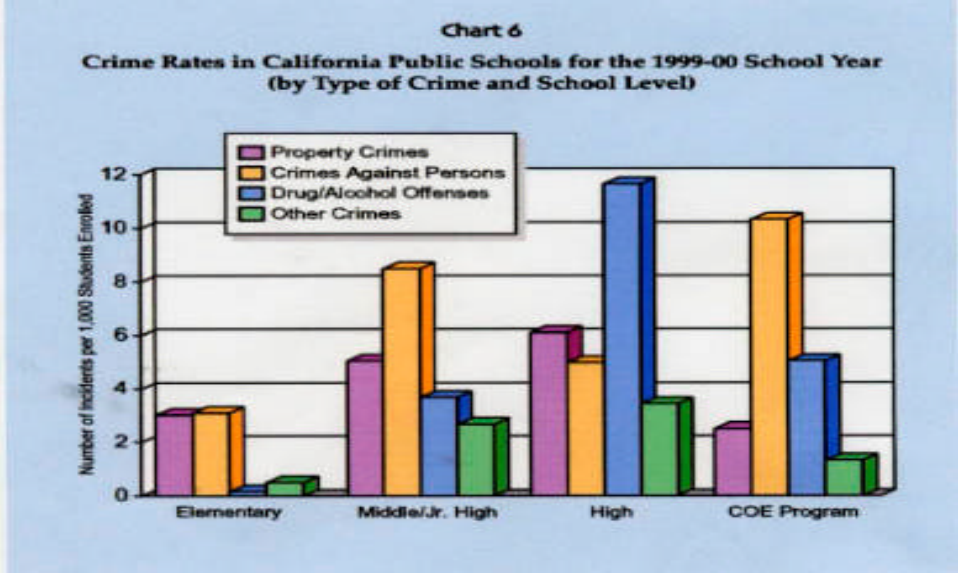
The *California Safe School Assessment Project* for the 1999-00 school year reports that high schools in California had the highest incidence of drug and alcohol offenses. According to the chart below, approximately 11.63 drug and alcohol offenses were reported per 1,000 students. Additionally, the report indicates that middle schools had the highest incidence of crimes against people-type offenses. Finally, the chart shows that most crime rates remained stable compared with those of previous years; however the rate of crimes against persons steadily increased at the elementary school level.

Teen pregnancy in school is also an issue that is prevalent within our school system. According to "Teen Pregnancy: Overall Trends and State-by-State Information," pregnancy, birth and abortion rates among U.S. teenagers continued their downward trend in 1996. Nationwide, the pregnancy rate declined 4 percent between 1995 and 1996, from 101.1 to 97.3 pregnancies per 1,000 women aged 15-19." [10] California's teen pregnancy statistics show that "Roughly 880,000 pregnancies occurred among women aged 15-19 in 1996; 62 percent of these pregnancies were to 18-19-year olds. California reported the highest number of adolescent pregnancies (126,300), followed by Texas, New York, Florida and Illinois (with about 40,000-80,000 each).

---

[9] *Long Beach Press Telegram*, "Violent School Crime Rises," March 1, 2002, Long Beach , CA, p. A1.

[10] The Alan Guttmacher Institute. "Teenage Pregnancy: Overall Trends and State-by-State Information" April 1999.



DARE-The Nation's Response to Drugs, Gangs, and Violence

In 1980, the Los Angeles Police Department developed the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program (DARE) to combat drug use in Los Angeles schools. Since its inception DARE has become a nationally recognized program. Today more than 80 percent of America's school districts use the DARE program. DARE is America's largest and most widely recognized substance abuse prevention curriculum.

Schools throughout California have been relying on the DARE program for almost two decades. The DARE program uses police officers as instructors, and encourages primarily fifth graders to "keep their bodies free of drugs." DARE enjoys widespread support among educators, law enforcement agencies and the media, and garners enormous financial support. While DARE is extremely popular, current research shows that DARE fails to have a significant impact on children's drug use As a result, DARE is being discontinued in many schools throughout California and the nation in favor of character education programs which tackle a wide variety of issues facing school children. To understand the reasons behind the transition from DARE to character education in California requires an examination of DARE, and the research leading towards its decline.

The Shortcomings of DARE

One of the criticisms of DARE is that it is based on a philosophy popular in the 1970s known as "values clarification." Values clarification is "not an attempt to teach students right and wrong values. Rather it is an approach designed to help students prize and act upon their freely chosen values. Thus values clarification is concerned with the process by which students arrive at their values, rather than the content of those values." [11] The question that arises is why anyone should assume that students are automatically going to make sound choices on their own. According to authors Robert F. Biehler and Jack Snowman, it is "quite possible that when students are encouraged to develop clear and consistent values, they will choose those that focus on material possessions, power, self-indulgence, and the like." [12]

Recent studies of the DARE program provide evidence that DARE is no more effective than any other drug education program in preventing drug use (or even abuse). In addition, no scientific study shows any statistically significant difference in drug-usage rates between schools with DARE programs and those without. The most exhaustive study of the DARE program, performed by the Research Triangle Institute in North Carolina in 1994, concluded that "The DARE program's limited effect on adolescent drug use contrasts with the program's popularity and prevalence. An important implication is that DARE could be taking the place of other, more beneficial drug education programs that students could be receiving." [13]

The 1994 study performed by RTI included site visits to school districts utilizing the DARE program and school districts using alternative drug education programs. The site visits covered four schools in three school districts. Two schools districts, located adjacent from each other in a northern inner city setting, had a large minority population and a significant drug problem. The third school district is situated in a rural environment in the South, has a large minority population, but a lesser drug problem than the northern schools. One school in the northern district used DARE, the other did not. The situation is the same in the rural district. (Authors of the study note that because the school districts and schools were limited in number and purposely, rather than randomly selected, the

---

[11] http://www.drcnet.org/DARE/section3.html, January 7, 2002

[12] Robert F. Biehler, and Jack Snowman, Psychology Applied to Teaching, Seventh Edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993).

[13] Christopher Ringwalt et al., "The Past and Future Directions of the DARE Program: An Evaluation Review", (North Carolina: Research Triangle Institute) Sept. 1994.

information gathered from the site visits is not representative of schools in general).[14]

Each team performing the site visits conducted interviews with several individuals, including the coordinator responsible for the development and implementation of drug prevention efforts in the school district, individuals teaching drug prevention curriculum to students (i.e. DARE officers), their supervisors (if any), and teachers in the classes where the DARE officers conduct the program. In each of the two DARE schools, the visiting team observed a DARE lesson and the officer's activities within the school but outside of the classroom.

The final summary of this portion of the RTI study noted that in the school districts with DARE, limited participation was reported from parents, teachers, and the community. Both schools also mentioned having limited resources for the DARE program, and both stressed the need for ongoing, long-term evaluations. The Non-DARE Schools did not use any specific drug prevention program, and implementation and coordination were sporadic. Each school reported wanting one person to be responsible for implementing the drug prevention program in the school.

The primary drawbacks noted by critics of the DARE program are:

1.) Efficacy: Widespread popularity and millions of dollars from tax revenues and private contributions have not made DARE a successful program. The RTI study noted that DARE mildly impacted overall drug use, and had no impact on marijuana use whatsoever.

2.) Content: Critics note several weaknesses of the DARE curriculum, and worry about the impact these holes have on children.

- The DARE message can be confusing to children. DARE does not forcefully tell kids they must avoid drugs, but instead tells them they have they right to say no to drugs implying they also have the right to say yes. The program does not teach kids what drug abuse is or how to identify it.

- DARE is not respectful to parents or other civilian adults. A DARE video entitled "The Land of Decisions and Choices", shown during Lesson 2, portrays adults as drunks or drug abusers. Only the DARE officer appears as an upstanding citizen.

---

[14] *Ibid.*

- The greatest drug risks to children are alcohol and tobacco, yet DARE's treatment of these substances is mild.
- The DARE program is founded upon unproven and possibly false educational hypotheses, the most notorious is that using drugs results from low self-esteem or high stress. DARE attempts to "build" self-esteem in students by teaching students they have the "right to be happy" and the "right to be respected." [15]

3.) Undermining the role and credibility of the police: The primary duties of a police officer are to protect the public and respond to emergencies. Expecting policemen and women to take on the task of instilling proper mental health attitudes in children is impractical and inefficient.

4.) Sacrifices excessive academic time: The DARE program consumes seventeen hours of academic time that would otherwise be allocated to traditional subjects such as math, science, or reading.

5.) Cost: DARE costs approximately $700 million per year. For many this is an extremely high price to pay for a drug education program, which yields few results.

In addition to these issues, DARE falls short in several other areas. The DARE program is currently only administered to fifth-grade students. Many children thus receive little or no drug education in junior high and high school where students are most susceptible to the temptations of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use. Drugs are also not the only issue facing the young people in America and more specifically California. School violence, depression, domestic upheaval (divorce, abuse), and teen pregnancy are all important topics that need to be addressed, but are completely overlooked by DARE.

---

[15] http://www.drcnet.org/DARE/section3.html, January 7, 2002

4. Laws Supporting Character Education

One of the major goals of public schools has been to affect the values, habits and social behavior of students. Character formation was thought to be one of the most important aspects of preserving the regime at the American founding. However, public education has gradually shifted away from character education as a goal.

Today, proponents of character education in California point to language in the state's Education Code that mandates character formation as a means for dealing with the lack of character among students and the web of social problems that include school violence, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and a variety of other serious problems. Educators and the public desire two outcomes: (1) academic competence and (2) character development. To reach these goals numerous programs such as DARE and Just Say No have been developed. Although there is much dispute over the success of these programs, we continue to search for solutions to the decline in character.

While on the campaign trial, President George W. Bush brought national attention to the lack of and need for character in America. President George W. Bush believes character education is necessary in today's public schools because, "parents have a tough battle in America today. Their children sometimes receive conflicting messages. What public education ought to do is stand on the side of parents. Values like caring, justice and fairness, respect for others, responsibility, and trustworthiness are universally agreed upon. There is no substitute for teaching our children basic values and positive behavior. What children learn in the classroom inevitably shapes their character and impacts their moral development." [16] Upon entering office, President Bush followed through on his campaign promise to bring character back to America. The creation of the Office of Faith Based Initiatives as well as the introduction of legislation addressing the need for character education in the nation's public schools are examples of his interest in character issue.

---

[16] http://edworkforce.house.gov/edwatch, April 19, 2001.

The President's Plan

On January 8, 2002 President Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. This bill is commonly referred to as House Resolution 1 (H.R. 1) and is the cornerstone of the administration's education policy. H.R. 1 makes character education a priority by providing the U.S. Department of Education with $25 million for character education programs in fiscal year 2002. This is a $15.7 million increase from the current $9.3 million granted for character education. These funds are made available to all states in the form of a grant for the support and creation of character education programs at the state level. Many states have received character education grants, which assist states in working with school districts to develop curriculum materials, provide teacher training, involve parents in character education and integrate character education programs in the curricula.

Character Education is included in H.R. 1 under Title V, Part D, Subpart 3--- Partnerships in Character Education. This bill provides federal funding for character education programs that teach characteristics such as caring, civic virtue, citizenship, justice, fairness, respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, and other elements deemed appropriate by the grantee. The Secretary of Education may award grants to eligible entities implementing character education programs that are easily incorporated into classroom activities and comply with state academic regulations. An eligible entity according to HR H.R. 1 is a state educational agency in partnership with one or more local education agencies, non-profit organizations, and/or institutions of higher education.

H.R. 1 eliminates current restrictions on who can receive an award; the number of grants made per year, and the total amount of funding each grantee may receive. "Previously, only state educational agencies (SEAs) could receive awards, the Department could make no more than 10 grants per year, and each SEA could receive a maximum of $1 million during the life of the program."[17] Under the new program, both SEAs and local education agencies (LEAs) are eligible to receive grants, and the restrictions on the number of awards and lifetime funding amounts are removed for character education. In addition, HR H.R. 1 eliminates the requirement that each state grantee develop a clearinghouse, but allows the Secretary of Education to establish a national clearinghouse that includes information on model programs, high-quality materials and curricula, and research findings in the area of character education.

---

[17] Character Education, Title V, Part D, Subpart 3.

Another facet of H.R. 1 is that all applicants demonstrate that the character education program for which the grant is sought has clear goals and objectives based on scientific research and includes a sample selection criterion, which has the potential for improving student performance. The applicant must also describe how parents, students, students with disabilities (including those with mental or physical disabilities), and other members of the community will be involved in the design and implementation of the program. The grant recipient will work with the larger community to increase the scope and application of the character education program.

Finally, H.R. 1 expects that grantees or an outside source will evaluate their programs and report to the Secretary of Education. The goal of the evaluation process is to hold all applicants accountable for reaching and obtaining the stated objectives of their programs. Factors taken into consideration when evaluating the success of programs funded under this section include the following:

- Discipline issues
- Student academic achievement
- Participation in extracurricular activities
- Parental and community involvement
- Faculty and administration involvement
- Students and staff morale
- Overall improvements in school climate for all students, including students with disabilities (including those with mental or physical disabilities)

One of the purposes of H.R. 1 is to help character education programs become incorporated into local schools. Therefore, at least 95 percent of the funds appropriated must be competitively awarded to State and local education agencies. In selecting elements of character to be taught in the program, the eligible entity must consider the views of the parents of the students to be taught under the program and the views of the students.

Character and California

The State of California, following the lead of the federal government, passed its own legislation regarding character education in 1994. California Education Code, Section 233.5, formerly Section 44806, is the section on the instruction of

pupils concerning morals, manners, and citizenship. It states that each teacher **shall endeavor** to instruct students on elements of character and citizenship. Each teacher is also encouraged to create and foster an environment that encourages pupils to realize their full potential, that is free from discriminatory attitudes, practices, events, or activities and that attempts to prevent acts of hate violence.

Additionally, Education Code Section 44790 Chapter 3.8 reveals the rationale used by the Legislature in passing character education legislation. It reads, "The legislature finds and declares that there is a compelling need to promote the development and implementation of effective educational programs in ethics and civic values in California schools in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12. The legislature further finds and declares that this compelling need is based upon recognition of the following:

- According to many public opinion polls, including a 1980 Gallop Poll, more than 2/3 of the American people favor education in ethics, and rank this at or near the 4 top of desirable educational goals.
- Young children and adolescents need to develop an understanding of, and an appreciation for, the need for a sound set of values and principles that are consistent with their own and others' well-being in the school, the community, the state, the nation, and the world.
- Ethics and civic values in the schools means instructional programs designed to provide pupils at all grade levels with instruction that, while respecting the dignity and worth of each pupil, teaches an understanding of, and an appreciation for, basic and shared ethical and civic values; fosters the development of those capacities and traits of character consistent with and conducive to basic and shared ethical and civic values; and develops those cognitive and critical thinking skills, insights, and emotional capacities essential for sound judgment in matters of ethical conduct and civic responsibility.
- Basic and shared ethical and civic values which lead to strengthened character include, but are not limited to human individuality, dignity, worth, fairness, equity, honesty, courage, freedom, autonomy, personal and social responsibility, and community and the common good."[18]

One avenue the State can use to fulfill the character education language of the State Education Codes is through the State curriculum. In 1995, the California

---

[18] California Education Code Section 44790 chapter 3.8, "Ethics and Civic Values in the Schools."

Department of Education (CDE) was one of four state education agencies to be awarded a four-year Partnership Grant for Character Education from the U.S. Department of Education. After being awarded the grant monies, California began a four-year project to develop character education models. A primary component of the project entitled California Partnerships in Character Education "was to provide guidance and resources for California teachers, schools, and districts interested in implementing character education in their curriculum and instruction."[19] The CDE selected the Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) as its partner. SCOE solicited the assistance of the Center for Youth Citizenship (C.Y.C.) and five elementary schools to develop school-site models. The project completed its last year of the four-year grant in 2001.[20] During the grant period, the California Character Education Clearinghouse was established to review character education materials based on standards set forth in the California State Board of Education's curriculum frameworks which are found in *the Handbook on the Rights and Responsibilities of School Personnel and Students in the Areas of Providing Moral, Civic, and Ethical Education, Teaching about Religion, Promoting Responsible Attitudes and Behaviors, and Preventing and Responding to Hate Violence*.

Another avenue that the state has taken to incorporate character education into the schools is through the adoption of specific frameworks that incorporate character education into all subjects. Details of these frameworks can be found in the Appendix A.

Is Education Code Section 233.5 Clear?

According staff members of the State Board of Education, the main State Education Code referring to character education, Section 233.5, can be interpreted in multiple ways. Section 233.5 states, "Each teacher **shall endeavor** to impress upon the minds of the pupils the principles of morality, truth, justice, patriotism, and a true comprehension of the rights, dignity of American citizenship, and the meaning of equality and human dignity, including the promotion of harmonious relations, kindness toward domestic pets and the humane treatment of living creatures, to teach them to avoid illness, profanity, and falsehood and to instruct them in manners and morals and the principles of a free government."

---

[19] www.cde.ca.gov/character/aboutpg.html: Character Education in California

[20] The report on the pilot program due to be released in April 2002. Preliminary results indicate the pilot was a success.

The question then arises, what does **shall endeavor** mean? According to the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Forth Edition, endeavor is defined as "A conscientious or concerted effort toward an end; an earnest attempt. Endeavor means to attempt (fulfillment of a responsibility or an obligation)."[21] Education professionals at the state level have a difficult time determining the intent of "shall endeavor." Chris Dowell, consultant in curriculum and framework at the State Board of Education, defines shall endeavor to mean that teachers are *encouraged* to follow Section 233.5. However, in his opinion **shall** does not mean **must**, therefore no teacher can be held accountable for not teaching character education. Additionally, Greg Geeting, Assistant Executive Director at the State Board of Education who assembled *The State Handbook on the Rights and Responsibilities of School Personnel and Students in the Areas of Providing Moral, Civic, and Ethical Education; Teaching About Religion, Promoting Responsible Attitudes and Behaviors and Preventing and Responding to Hate Violence*, believes that **shall endeavor** means that teachers must endeavor, while expressing that the difficult part is holding teachers accountable for endeavoring. By saying shall endeavor, he asserts the State is saying teachers **must** endeavor, but admits it is almost impossible to hold teachers accountable. Furthermore, Geeting believes the Legislature selected the language of Section 233.5 very carefully, implying that California's main character education code may have been a victim of political manipulation. The vague language with which Section 233.5 is comprised leaves room for feeble attempts to teach character education. Teachers and school districts alike have a vast gray are in which to conceal the absence of character education in instruction.

What Are Other States Doing?

Other state legislatures have gone to great lengths to ensure that character education is taught in their school systems. The State Legislature and the Governor of New York enacted a law requiring instruction in civility, citizenship and character education. The law entitled Section 801 ---*Instruction in civility, citizenship and character education* states the following: The regents shall ensure that the course of instruction in grades kindergarten through twelve includes a component on civility, citizenship and character education. Such components shall instruct students on the principles of honesty, tolerance, personal responsibility, respect for others, observance of laws and rules, courtesy, dignity, and other traits that will enhance the quality of their experiences in the

---

[21] The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition, Published by Houghton Mifflin Company.

community. The regents shall determine how to incorporate such component in existing curricula and the commissioner shall promulgate any regulations needed to carry out such determinations of the regents." [22]

In Texas, the Legislature unanimously passed a similar character education bill. HB 946 amends the Texas Education Code by adding Section 29.903 that states Texas schools must teach character education programs "…that stress positive character traits, such as: courage; trustworthiness (including honesty, reliability, punctuality, and loyalty); integrity, respect and courtesy; responsibility (including accountability, diligence, perseverance, and self-control); fairness (including justice and freedom from prejudice); caring (including kindness, empathy, compassion, consideration, patience, generosity, and charity); good citizenship, (including patriotism, concern for the common good and the community, and respect for authority and the law); and school pride." [23] In addition, the bill requires that such programs use integrated teaching strategies; and be age appropriate.

The Colorado State Legislature recognized through legislation that core character qualities help give youth the basic interpersonal skills and attributes that are critical building blocks for successful relationships. Colorado believes that there is significant statewide interest in providing direction to school districts with regard to character education for Colorado's youth. "While parents are the primary and most important moral educators of their children, such efforts should be reinforced in the school and community environments. The General Assembly further finds that research indicating that core character qualities such as family support, community involvement, positive influence, motivation to achieve, respect for person and property, common courtesy, conflict resolution, integrity, honesty, fairness, a sense of civil and personal responsibility, purpose, and self-respect help give youth the basic interpersonal skills and attributes that "are critical building blocks for successful relationships. "[24] H.B. 01-1292 strongly encourages each school district to establish a character education program designed to help students cultivate the qualities of character. This will promote an upright, moral, and desirable citizenry and better prepare students to become positive contributors to society. With the passage of H.B. 01-1292 Colorado created a character education fund authorizing the department of education to receive grants, gifts,

---

[22] www.emsc.nysed.gov/deputy/Documents/character-ed.html, The State Education Department, Project SAVE, Safe Schools Against Violence in Education Act: Instruction in Civility, Citizenship and Character Education.

[23] http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlo/77r/billtext/HB00911I.HTM, Texas Legislature

[24] http://www.state.co.us/gov_dir/leg_dir/olls/sl2001/sl.276.htm, State of Colorado Legislature Information, House Bill 01-1293 Digest, Character Education

donations and contributions from any source, public or private for implementing this act.

This section describes the laws regarding character education at the Federal level, California, and in a variety of other states. It appears through this research that character education receives support in both liberal and conservative circles. Through the passage of H.R. 1 and state laws passed in states around the country, one can infer that today's elected officials believe character education should be taught in the public school system. Character education has received significant legislative support, demonstrating that many elected officials are willing to legislate its existence in the classroom in order to make sure that today's youth receives instruction in the principles of character education.

5. Issues and Debates

The debate over character education has generated mounting attention and support over the last twenty years. The initial support for character education was found on the conservative side of the political spectrum. However, since the discussion on character education resurfaced it has slowly gained support from the other side of the aisle. Moderate Democrats are increasingly lending their support to the character education cause. This shift is associated with the rise in school violence, drug abuse and teen pregnancy, among other social problems. Today supporters of character education include such groups as the National Education Association and National School Boards Association.

Popular Opposition to Character Education

Although the support for character education is growing rapidly there remains a vocal yet diminishing constituency who adamantly oppose its inclusion in public school curriculum. This opposition can be found on the far end of both ideological spectrums. The far right and left have been unwavering in their opposition to character education. Despite their firm stance their arguments are playing a smaller role in shaping the debate on character education. The following provides a look at the prevailing opinions that dominate the opposition to character education.

The first opposing viewpoint, which is largely held by many Christian groups, is that character education can be hollow and misleading when taught within a curriculum that is silent about religion. According to Charles Haynes, author of

Character Education in the Public Schools, "When religion is largely ignored students get the false and dangerous message that religious ideas and practices are insignificant for human experience. Disconnecting the principles of character education from their Biblical origins removes the religious importance to the principle." Failure to identify the religious foundation of character education principles makes them weak and less likely to be followed.

Determining which character education principles schools will teach is the second issue.[25] Some parents are concerned about the information their children are taught during school hours. We live in a complex society of vast moral diversity with no agreement on a moral canon and because of the various views held by different ethnic groups and religions, government agencies find it difficult to choose which values should or shouldn't be taught and how they should be applied. Furthermore, many are concerned about how the use of the principles will differ from their chosen application. For example, even if a school agrees to teach students to be responsible and tolerant, obscurities will remain. Does encouraging responsible sexual behavior require teaching "abstinence until marriage" or "safer sex?"

A third common viewpoint is that teachers are not adequately trained to teach character education. Given the current state of American public schools, teachers have their hands full trying to teach academic subjects. With the dismal performance of our students on national and international standardized tests we can not afford to train teachers in character education when they should focus on improving academic performance.

Largely those who advocate for the separation between church and state hold the fourth viewpoint. The claim says teaching character education is tantamount to teaching religion in schools. The values expressed in character education are a subtle form of religious indoctrination. Doctrines such as turn to the other cheek, treat others as you would have others treat you, and have the faith are a few examples of character education principles that have a religious foundation. Because some character education principles have a religious foundation there is an underlying fear that schools would be violating separation of church and state.

The fifth view states teaching character education is a parental responsibility, not the role of schools.[26] Morality is a private matter that should be left to the family to

---

[25] Clarken, Rodney H. *Character Education*. Department of Northern Michigan University. 1991.

[26] Goodman, Joan F. *Objections (and Responses) to Moral Education*. Education Week on the WEB. May 30, 2001.

educate the children. As a personal issue like religion, sex, and politics, morality is a belief system, which need not be publicly shared, especially for those in minority positions.

The opposing and supporting positions to character education we have identified reflect those we have repeatedly discovered in our research. We recognize that others exist outside of the positions identified in this paper.

Popular Support for Character Education

The support for character education has grown in recent years. At the onset of the movement to revive character education in public schools, support was concentrated in conservative circles, but today, a large base of bi-partisan support exists. The following positions outline the popular supporting viewpoints for character education.

The first major supporting viewpoint is that character education long formed an intricate aspect of the American education curriculum until the emergence of values clarification. Character education can be traced back to the Founding Fathers who recognized the importance of values in education. The revitalization of character education in schools is bringing it back to its rightful place in American public schools.

The first argument supporting character education's inclusion in public schools is the claim that it makes schools more civil communities. As students are taught the principles of character education and work to implement them into their daily lives the school environment is improved. Students taught the values of character education are less likely to cause classroom disturbances, participate in school violence or “ditch” school among other actions. As schools become more civil communities, teachers and students can spend more time focusing on academics. The reduction in violence, class disruptions, and other distractions in class allow more time for instruction.

The second popular view in support of character education is that it prepares students to be productive citizens.[27] The values taught in character education programs teach students civic pride and responsible citizenship that is missing in school curriculum. Lessons in citizenship teach students vital information about the duties of being citizens of a democratic republic. Students must be taught this information in order to preserve the American way of life.

---

[27] Morals in Education. www.towson.edu . pages 1-3.

Lastly, supporters suggest that teaching character education in schools can fill a void that many students are not receiving at home. With both parents working outside the home, more single parent households and the high divorce rate, many parents have less time to participate in the education of their children. Students are missing vital lessons in character education that were traditionally taught in the home and reinforced at school. Supporters of the character education movement assert that schools must take the lead role in teaching character to students.

The opposing and supporting positions to character education we have identified reflect those we have repeatedly discovered in our research. We recognize that others exist outside of the positions identified in this paper.

6. Constructing a Plan of Action

Throughout this paper, we have discussed the foundation, need for and popular views relating to character education. Now we turn to devising a plan of action to reshape California's character education program. To resolve the various problems identified within the paper thus far, we have identified four options that we believe could reshape California's character education program. Although we recognize that additional options may exist, the following options closely match the criteria selected by the authors.

Options

The authors of this paper have identified four potential options to reshaping character education in California. These include (1) status quo, (2) amending Section 233.5, (3) empowering parents and (4) educating teachers.

Option 1: Status Quo

Since 1994, the California Education Code has included language regarding the implementation of Character Education in public schools. The first option we considered is the *status quo*,—that the state could rely on the current character education provisions outlined in the California Education Code. Section 233.5 states that "each teacher **shall endeavor** to impress upon the minds of the pupils the principles of morality, truth, justice, patriotism, and a true comprehension of

the rights, duties, and dignity of American citizenship, and the meaning of equality and human dignity, including the promotion of harmonious relations, kindness toward domestic pets and the humane treatment of living creatures, to teach them to avoid illness, profanity, and falsehood, and to instruct them in manners and morals and the principles of a free government. Each teacher is also encouraged to create and foster an environment that encourages pupils to realize their full potential and that is free from discriminatory attitudes, practices, events, or activities, in order to prevent acts of hate violence."

Education professional at the state and local level have trouble identifying the intent of this section. Does *shall endeavor* mean that teachers must or are they merely encouraged to teacher character education principles?

Option 2: Amend Section 233.5

Since becoming apart of the education code, Section 233.5 has been subject to a vast amount of interpretation. Vague language, with which the section is composed, has significantly contributed the presence of interpretation. An example of vague language is evident in the fist sentence of the section that reads, "Each teacher shall endeavor to impress upon the minds of the pupils the principles…" What does shall endeavor mean? Is it mandatory for teachers to teach the principles outlined in the code or are teachers required to attempt teaching character education or does it mean something else all together? The state can strengthen and clarify the section's language to read that "each teach is required to" rather than "each teach shall endeavor to." Additionally, the state can further strengthen the section by including additional language that addresses the lack of parental involvement, the incorporation of character education into lessons, comprehensive range of issues and other holes present in the section.

Option 3: Encourage Parental Involvement

Parents and families have traditionally been at the forefront in shaping a child's character. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, parental involvement in education is often cited as a key to determining a child's educational success. The degree to which parents are active participants in education reflects a child's academic success.

To maximize the affects of character education on students, California can create a character education program that seeks to teach parents character education principles to be taught in the home. This program could operate under the PTA or other organizations geared toward parents. A successful parental involvement

program teaching parents the character education curriculum could result in the elimination of Section 233.5 from the Education Code. With parents actively educating their children in character education principles, there will be no need for schools and teachers to engage in this activity. A character void will not exist in students because parents will use the given tools to assist in the development character in children.

Option 4: Incorporate Into Teacher Credentialing

The California Education Code Section 223.5 states that "each teacher shall endeavor" to teach character education principles outlined in the section. Additionally, the state provides examples through the frameworks on how teachers can incorporate character education in the classroom. In spite of this, many teachers fail to incorporate character education principles because doing so is not pushed by administrators. Additionally, many teachers may not be versed in techniques on how to incorporate character education into classroom instruction.

To correct this problem, the state can require that techniques in teaching character education be added to teacher credential requirements. Currently, teachers are required to obtain a credential to teach public school in California. Teaching credential programs throughout the state educate current and future teachers on concepts and techniques that the state deems necessary in order to teacher in California public schools. Adding techniques in character education to the credential curriculum will educate teachers on the principles of character education. In addition, teachers will learn how to implement them into the class.

Choosing Options That Work

In the previous sections of this paper, we identified the arguments proponents and opponents frequently use to bolster their positions on the implementation of character education in public schools. We have developed the criteria-which was used to select the options and recommendations-based on the shortcomings of other programs and popular positions on character education. The six criteria to which each option and ultimately our recommendation is subject to are: a comprehensive approach, includes parental involvement, addresses disciplinary problems and school violence, incorporated into daily classroom lessons and activities and does not violate separation between church and state.

Comprehensive Approach

We believe that a comprehensive approach to character education is necessary to address the numerous issues that students today faced. Our definition of a comprehensive approach is one that explores a range of issues that are relevant to the circumstances and situations that students encounter. Other programs like DARE and Just Say No focused on a narrow range of issues. They do not explore other issues that are equal to (if not beyond) drug abuse. Using the single-issue format of current programs, schools would be forced to implement several programs to address social problems. Research indicates that a comprehensive program exploring a wide range of relevant issues is more useful to students.

Parental Involvement

Research indicates the parental involvement is an important factor in a student's academic success. According to a study conducted by the National Center For Education Statistics *Efforts by Public K-8 Schools to Involve Parents in Children's Education*, "the last two decades have demonstrated that children whose parents are involved are more likely than other youth to have positive educational outcomes such as improved academic performance, better school attendance, higher aspirations, reduced drop out rates and increased graduation." Given the important role parents play in the lives of children we believe that an effective character education program should include a parental involvement component.

School Violence and Discipline Issues

A report by the California Department of Education, the *California Safe Schools Assessment* for 2000-01 showed that crimes committed against another person, property crimes and drug and alcohol violations increased statewide for the third year in a row. This rise in discipline infractions equals to less class time spent in for academic instruction. Additionally, the presence of discipline problems and school violence creates an environment that is not conducive to learning. When students are afraid of violent actions taking place at schools they are less able to concentrate on their academic subjects. A character education program must directly address school violence and discipline to be any real help for students.

Incorporated Into Lessons

Teachers have learning objectives that must be met per school district and state standards. These objectives are many and account for the bulk of the school day.

We believe that a character education program should not call for an additional segment of classroom instruction. On the contrary, character education should be incorporated into daily classroom lessons and activities, which does not cause disruption in the flow of the school day.

Separation Between Church and State

It is imperative that the recommendation not violate the separation of church and state doctrine. Doing so could incite protest from those who adamantly monitor this issue like the ACLU as well as many religious groups. A viable option for character education in California should caution against any activities, principles or rhetoric that is in violation of the separation doctrine.

Political Feasibility

The political feasibility of each option and ultimately our recommendation must be considered. The implementation of character education in public schools is an emotional discussion that can incite political opposition. The recommendation rendered will determine the degree of opposition, if any. The option selected should take care to avoid political outcry that could (in worst case scenario) result in the elimination of character education from the Education Code altogether. The recommended action should remain on the moderate side of the issue where a large base of bi-partisan support exists.

Recommendations

To address the growing social problems of California's students we recommend (option 2) that California amend the language of section 233.5 of the education code to clarify and strengthen the implementation of character education in public schools. We have selected amending the language of section 233.5 because by amending the language the state could address the shortfalls that the section currently possesses. Since the implementation of character education is currently present in the education code, it is more feasible to first attempt to make changes to the code before implementing character education through a new section of the education code.

Why Other Options Did Not Work

The option to leave Section 233.5 of the California Education Code in its current form is not a viable option because it fails to meet several of the requisite criteria. Section 233.5 does not encourage parental involvement, a key ingredient in any successful character education program. The code does not address in specific terms how to combat disciplinary problems, although a couple of vague goals such as "promotion of harmonious relations" and "kindness towards domestic pets and the humane treatment of living creatures" is included in 233.5. Furthermore, no guidance whatsoever is to be found in the code regarding implementation of character education into the classroom.

The next option, encouraging parents to teach their children character education at home, is even less feasible. While such an approach certainly encourages parental involvement, parent participation is not guaranteed. Parents might be unable to attend character education training programs, be angered that the state is attempting to tell them how best to instill good character traits in their children, or just not care enough to even bother. Schools are best equipped to teach character education because the children spend the bulk of their time at school, are away from the distractions of home, and in an environment where the lessons taught in character education can be utilized through interactions with other students. In addition to these shortcomings, it would be difficult to monitor the effectiveness of character education were it being taught at home.

Finally, mandating character education implementation courses for teachers also falls short of meeting our criteria. This approach is the most successful in incorporating character education into daily classroom lessons and activities. It is difficult however to monitor success when every teacher is using his or her own unique way of teaching character education.

7. The Road to Implementation

In order to effectively implement the recommendation, legislation must be passed. The language of Education Code 233.5 must be uniformly understood to mean all teachers must teach character education in California public schools. The California State Assembly must initiate a bill to change the phrase "shall endeavor" to "must instruct." Additionally, a specific program/curriculum must be named as the official State of California Character Education program to ensure that all students receive a comparable education in this subject area. In order for character education to become part of the California curriculum, the State Board of Education must be persuaded to add character education to the curriculum frameworks. The curriculum frameworks are the blueprint for implementing grade level content standards adopted by the California State Board of Education. Frameworks are developed by the Curriculum Development and Supplemental Materials Commission, which also reviews and recommends textbooks and other instructional materials to be adopted by the State Board.

The Education Code must not be left open to any interpretation, thus the wording must be carefully chosen to impart a direct command to educate all students in character education. With support from lobbying groups as well as parents, teachers and students, the Legislature will pass a revised Education Code 233.5. Empirical studies, personal testimony from educators, and students who have benefited from character education will assist in garnering public support.

If the legislature is unsuccessful in passing an amendment to Section 233.5, then a ballot initiative must be proposed. California voters have successfully initiated and passed several ballot initiatives relating to education in the past few years.

The implementation of this policy will build on existing government structures and frameworks within the California public school curriculum. The California Handbook on the Rights and Responsibilities of School Personnel and Students in the Areas of Providing Moral, Civic and Ethical Education, Teaching About Religion, Promoting Responsibility, Attitudes and Behaviors and Preventing and Responding to Hate Violence, has aided the current character education policies and will assist in the successful implementation of the amended Section 233.5.

For the newly amended code to be effective the code must be enforced. The State Board of Education believes that teaching character education programs is the responsibility of local school districts. Local districts must follow the terms of the

Education Code and should also take advantage of appropriate community resources that can assist the teaching of character education. This includes funding from H.R. 1. Local education institutions, California Department of Education, State Superintendent of Education and the California Legislature are in charge of properly and effectively implementing the terms of Section 233.5. All aforementioned institutions must be held accountable for the successful implementation of Section 233.5.

The program can be implemented in all schools over a period of 3-5 years. Schools will be able to adjust to the addition in their curriculum if the process of implementing the program is deliberate and measured. Implementation of the amended version of Section 233.5 will take an efficient coordinated system to guide, monitor and assist implementation processes. The goals of the character education program must be clarified for educators, parents and students and the progress towards reaching these goals must be measured over the implementation period.

A specific set of criteria will be used to evaluate the success of the program. These criteria include the following:

- Reduction in school violence
- Decrease in the number of suspensions
- Fewer school fights
- Increase in graduation rates
- A stronger school community

The State Board of Education will be responsible for tracking character education programs in all California public schools. A yearly review of all social, legal and fiscal impacts from the revision of 233.5 is necessary. In concert with the Board of Education, a board of volunteers consisting of Legislators, educators, administrators and parents will monitor the character education program and its successes / failures within each community or local school district.

Teachers should be expected to teach character education in their individual classroom using their own processes. To instruct new teachers in the methods and processes of character education programs there will need to be an additional requirement to the credentialing process. The professional development and salary point classes all California public school teachers engage in will be a forum for character education methods, processes, preparation, discussion and edification. Character education will become a part of the mandatory continuing

education for teaching professionals. Providing teachers with the proper materials for a program such as “Character Counts” will be the most effective and non-invasive way to introduce character education into the classrooms of California.

Teachers must be held accountable for teaching character education. The character education curriculum must be treated similarly to any other aspect of the curriculum. No teacher would think of ignoring mathematics in the classroom and likewise no teacher should ignore character education. Although there is no test to absolutely measure the amount of character learned by students, a system of reporting to the Board regarding the character education classes and process must be a part of teacher accountability.

Character education in the classroom is only a partial solution to speed the healing of America’s web of social ills. Children spend over a third of their day in a school setting but the home is another crucial environment where character, patriotism, reason and logic must be imparted to children in the United States. Schools can only supplement what is learned at home. For this reason schools must be encouraged to hold parent education classes, discussion forums for adults and inter-generational meetings to educate parents as well as children on the importance of character. Grant funds and community business partnerships with schools can defray any costs incurred by schools attempting to educate parents.

Obstacles to Successful Implementation

We foresee the primary obstacle to the successful implementation of our recommendation is the teacher's unions in California. Teachers unions, namely the California Teachers Association (CTA) yields a tremendous amount of power in California's political arena. Our concern revolves around the ability of the CTA to block legislation by influencing the Governor and the Legislature to oppose strengthening Section 233.5. An additional concern looms around the introduction of Assembly Bill 2160, which is sponsored by Assembly Speaker Herb Wesson. If passed, AB 2160 will expand the scope of collective bargaining to include all aspects of public education-this includes curriculum. [28] Since character education is a matter of curriculum, the teachers unions could bring its implementation to the bargaining table, which may result in a "watered down" program.

---

[28] School Reform News April 2002. State Education Roundup pg 14.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, the programs currently used to address the vast array of social problems common to youth are not providing the results necessary. DARE, championed by educators and law enforcement personnel for over two decades as a cure for drug use in the public schools, is being discredited as a viable method for combating drugs in California schools. In addition, few programs exist that address the wide range of issues affecting school children today such as high drop-out rates, low standardized test scores, rising levels of school violence, and teen pregnancy. After an exhaustive search to find a remedy for these social ills parents, teachers, school administrators, and politicians are heralding the rediscovery of character education. In 1994, the California Legislature addressed the issue of character education by passing a bill that placed Section 233.5 in the Education Code. Although present in the Education Code, the implementation of character education is feeble-at best-as the section is currently written. The vague language in the section contributes to this problem. If all California school children are to benefit from the lessons taught through character education, Section 233.5 must be amended to include stronger language mandating that public school teachers instruct students in character education. In addition fears that character education violates separation of church and state doctrine need to be set aside, and parents must be encouraged to actively participate in the inculcation of positive character traits in their children. Implementation of these recommendations will result in a safer and more civil learning environment for California's school children and teachers.

References and Bibliography

"A Different Look At DARE." The Drug Reform Coordination Network. January 7, 2002.www.drcnet.org/DARE.

The Alan Guttmacher Institute. "Teenage Pregnancy: Overall Trends and State-by-State Information". April 1999.

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition Copyright 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Published by Houghton Mifflin Company.

Aristotle. *The Politics*. Translated by Lord, Carnes Chicago: University of Chicago. 1985.

Aristotle. *Nichomacean Ethics*. Internet Classics Archive. Translated by Ross, W.D. http://classics.mit.edu//Aristotle/nichomacean.html.

Barger, Dr. Robert N. "A Summary of Lawrence Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development." University of Notre Dame, 2000. www.ne.edu/~rbarger/kohlberg.html.

Bellah, Robert. *Habits of the Hearts: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*. University of California Press, 1985.

Bennett, William J. *The Book of Virtues.* New York: Simon & Shuster 1993.

California Department of Education. *Character Education*. Oct. 17, 2000.

California Education Code Section 233-233.8. http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section+edc&group=00001-01000&file=233-2

California Education Code Section 44790 chapter 3.8 Ethics and Civic Values in the School. www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgibin/displaycode?Section=edc&group=

California Education Code Section 51000-51021. www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode? Section=edc&group=500001-51000&file=510000

California Partnerships in Character Education "*Building Communities and Schools of Character"* www.youthcitizenship.org/program/ce/faq.html.

Canady, Tommie R. *School Violence Character Education*. School Violence Resource Center.

Center for Youth Citizenship. www.clre.org/program/ce/resource/cereso.htm.

"Character Counts! – Background." Character Counts Coalition. January 21, 2002. www.charactercounts.org/background/htm.

Character Counts. Coalition Membership List. www.charactercounts.org/members/html.

Character Education History-Social Science Framework. www.cde.ca.gov/character/frmintro.html.

Character Education Evaluation Criteria. www.cde.ca.gov/character/criteria.html.

Character Education Partnership. *Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education*. www.chararcter.org/principles/index/cgi.

Character Plus. http://info.cdd.org/staffdev/chared/characterplus.html.

Clarken, Rodney H. *Character Education*. Department of Northern Michigan University. 1991.

Colorado House Bill 01-1292. http://www.state.co.us/gov_dir/olls/s12001/sl.276.htm, State of Colorado Legislature Information, House Bill 01-1293 Digest, Character Education.

Curtler, Hugh Mercer. *Recalling Education*. Wilmington, DE: ISI Books 2001.

"Definitions of Character Education." Indiana Clearinghouse for Citizenship and Character Education. April 6, 2002. eric.indiana.edu/chared/definitions.html.

http://www.ed.uicu.edu?EPS/PES-Yearbook/1998/Robertson.html.

Education Watch-A Publication from the Communications Team at the House Education and the Workforce, April 19, 2991. http://edworkforce.house.gov/edwatch.

Elliot, Jeff. "Drug Prevention Placebo: How DARE Wastes Time, Money, and Police." Reason. March 1995: 14-21. Reprinted by permission by The Lindesmith Center-Drug Policy Foundation. www.lindesmith.org/library/tlcdare.html.

"Giraffe Project." The Giraffe Project. January 21, 2002. www.giraffe.org/projectinfo.html.

Goldstein, Andrew. "The Pros and Cons of the Bush Character Education Plan". *Time Magazine*. July 6, 2001. www.time.com/time/clumnist/printout.

Goodman, Joan F. *Objections (and Responses) to Moral Education*. Education Week on the WEB. May 30, 2001.

Grant, Gerald, "The Character of Education and the Education of Character", Daedalus v110 p135-149, 1981.

Guroian, Vigen. *Tending the Heart of Virtue –How Classic Stories Awaken a Child's Moral Imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press 1998.

Handbook on the Legal Rights and Responsibilities of School Personnel and Students in the Areas of Moral and Civic Education and Testing About Religion. Adopted by the California State Board on October 14, 1994. California Department of Education.

Charles Haynes, *Character Education in the Public Schools*,

"Heartwood Institute: Nurturing the Future." The Heartwood Institute. January 21, 2002. www.heartwoodethics.org.

Hodge, R. Lewis, "A Myriad of Values:A Brief History", Symposium, American Educational Research Association, 1989.

HR 1- Leave No Child Left Behind, Subpart 3-Partnererships in Character Education. http://thomas/loc/gov/cgo-bin/query/D?c107:1/temp/~c107v1JCvH:e1261922:

HR1-The No Child Left Behind Act is Good News for Children and Families of the United States. http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/education/states/ca.html.

Josephson Institute of Ethics. "The Ethics of American Youth: Violence and Substance Abuse: Press Release". www.josephsoninstitute.org/Survey2000/violence2000-pressrelease.htm.

Kirschenbaum, Howard, "A Comprehensive Model for Values Education and Moral Education" Phi Delta Kappan, v73n10p77-176 June 1992.

Likona, Thomas "Educating the Moral Child", Principal, p6-10, November 1988.

Likona, Thomas, "The Return of Character Education", Educational Leadership, v51n3p6-11 November 1993.

Lovett, Karen. *Parental Involvement in Education.* www.extendyourhand.com. Jan. 18, 2002.

Magdol, Lynn, "Factors for Adolescent Achievement", University of Washington-Madison Cooperative Extension, July 1992.

"Making Character a Daily Goal"www.charactercounts.org.

National Center for Education Statistics, "Violence and Discipline Problems in U.S. Public Schools: 1996 97". U.S. Department of Education.

Otten, Evelyn Holt. *Character Education*. ERIC Digest. August, 2000.

Pacific Center for Violence Prevention. "Preventing Youth Violence". www.pcvp.org.

"Past and Future Directions of the DARE Program." Research Triangle Institute. September 1994. www.ncjrs.orgtxtfilesdarerev.txt.

Project SAVE, Safe Schools Against Violence in Education Act: Instruction in Civility, Citizenship and Character Education, September 20001. www.emsc.nysed.gov/deputy/Documents/character-ed.html

Ravitch, Diane, Left Back: A Century of Battles Over School Reform, Copyright 2000. Touchstone printing.

"Responsibility Management Training for Parents"www.ethicsusa.com .

Robertson, Emily. Aristotle and Robenstine on Moral Education New York: Syracuse University Press 1998.

"School to Work: Ethics in the Workplace" www.goodcharacter.com.

"School Violence and Prevention" www.healthlink.mcw.edu/content/article.

School Violence Resource Center www.svrc.net.

Starr, Linda. *Is Character Education the Answer?* Education World. Feb. 1, 1999.

State of California, Office of the Attorney General, Bureau of Criminal Information and Analysis, *Criminal Justice Statistics Center Report Series*.

"Teen Mediation and Violence Prevention"www.mediate.com.

Texas House Bill 946.
http://www.capitaol.state.tx.us.tlo/77r/billtext/HB009111.HTM, Texas Legislature

Titus, Dale N. *Values Education in American Secondary Schools*. ERIC DIGEST. 1994.

2001 Character Assessment Chart www.cde.ca.gov/character/.

"2001 National Schools of Character: Practices to Adopt and Adapt" www.character.org.

Viadero, Debra. *Survey Finds Young People More Likely to Lie, Cheat, Steal*. Education Week. Nov. 25, 1992.

"Violent School Crime Rises" *Long Beach Press Telegram*. A1. Long Beach, CA. March 1, 2001.

"What Does the National Research Say About DARE?" DARE. January 7, 2002. www.dare.com/common/natl_research.htm.

Why is it important to teach character education in our schools? www.pdrpip.com/productssofrm.quotes/htm.

"Youth Violence Report," www.surgeongeneral/gov/library/youthviolencereport.html.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Handbook Adopted by California State Board of Education

Handbook on the Rights and Responsibilities of School Personnel and Students in the Areas of Providing Moral, Civic, and Ethical Education Teaching About Religion, Promoting Responsibility Attitudes and Behaviors and Preventing and Responding to Hate Violence. Adopted by the California State Board of Education on October 14, 1994. Copies of this publication are available for the Bureau of Publications, Sales Unit, California Department of Education, and P.O. BOX 271, SACRAMENTO, CA 95812-0271.

- The History-Social Science Framework for California Pubic Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve. This was adopted by the State Board of Education in July 1987 and reaffirmed in November 1994. It included multiple opportunities at every grade level to teach character education in the curriculum through "the district curriculum, library resources, classroom lessons, and literature and primary sources used to enrich the history-social science curriculum." [29]

- The English Language Arts Framework For California Public School Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve "promotes a systematic meaning centered literature program for all students to provide our future adults with 1) a solid body of knowledge derived from a multicultural perspective, 2) experience in confronting important human issues and conflicts, 3) a strong sense of values, including personal, social, and aesthetic values, and 4) the necessary language and thinking skills acquired through frequent and meaningful listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

- The Foreign Language Framework cites the power that language has to foster improved understanding between peoples of various cultural backgrounds. California's Health Framework "is constructed around four unifying ideas of health literacy that lead to positive character 1)

---

[29] www.cde.ca.gov/character/frmintro.html: The History Social Science Framework

acceptance of personal responsibility for lifelong health, 2) respect for and promotion of the health of others, 3) an understanding of the process of growth and development, and 4) informed use of health-related information, products and services." [30]

- The Physical Education Framework seeks to strengthen character with "a sequential, developmental, age-appropriate physical education program designed to provide students with the knowledge and ability needed to maintain an active, healthy, lifestyle." [31] The framework places a strong emphasis on maintaining a positive self-image and helps students strive to become the best that they can be through planned physical activities. In the area of social development, the framework advocates "students develop appropriate social behaviors by working independently and with others during planned activities.

- The Science Framework emphasizes the fact that the character of science must be open to inquiry and controversy and free of dogmatism. "The curriculum promotes students understanding of how we come to know what we know and how we test and revise our thinking." [32]

- The Visual and Performing Arts Framework seeks for students to express the creative power of their minds, which leads them to become cognizant of a value their own capacities and personal uniqueness, and appreciate and become sensitive to the creative expression of others.

Appendix 2: The 17 DARE Lessons

1. Introducing DARE
2. Understanding the Effects of Mind-Altering Drugs
3. Considering Consequences
4. Changing Beliefs About Drug Use
5. Learning Resistance Techniques – Ways to Say No

---

[30] The California Handbook on the Rights and Responsibilities of School Personnel and Students in the Areas of Providing Moral, Civic, and Ethical Education; Teaching about Religion, Promoting Responsible Attitudes and Behaviors and Preventing and Responding to Hate Violence, State Board of Education, October 14, 1994 pg. 32

[31] IBID #10 pg. 38

[32] IBID #10 pg 39

6. Building Self-Esteem
7. Learning Assertiveness – a Response Style
8. Managing Stress Without Taking Drugs
9. Reducing Violence
10. Combating Media Influences on Drug Use and Violence
11. Making Decisions About Risky Behaviors
12. Saying Yes to Positive Alternatives
13. Having Positive Role Models
14. Resisting Gang and Group Violence
15. Summarizing DARE Lessons
16. Taking a Stand
17. DARE Culmination

Appendix 3: Problems in Schools

The next bothersome issues are the numbers that involve physical attacks. The report states, "Physical attacks or fights without a weapon led the list of reported crimes in public schools with about 190,000 such incidents reported for 1996-97. About 116,000 incidents of theft or larceny were reported along with 98,000 incidents of vandalism. These less serious or nonviolent crimes were more common than serious violent crimes with schools reporting about 4,000 incidents of rape or other type of sexual battery, 7,000 robberies, and 11,000 incidents of physical attacks or fights reported in which weapons were used." [33] It has been suggested through the media that the students involved within the Columbine shooting, retained some of these characteristics. The shootings may have been prevented if they took courses, which taught good self-esteem, preserving life, and responsibility. It is important for students to be aware of the consequences before the acts are committed.

Crime and violence are more of a problem in middle and high schools, than in elementary schools. The facts say "Forty-five percent of elementary schools

---

[33] National Center for Education Statistics, "Violence and Discipline Problems in U.S. Public Schools: 1996-97". US Department of Education.

reported one or more violent incidents compared with seventy-four percent of middle and seventy-seven percent of high schools. Four percent of elementary schools reported one or more serious violent crimes compared with nineteen percent of middle and twenty-one percent of high schools".[34] "Of the less serious or nonviolent crimes, the largest ratios of crimes per 100,000 students were found in middle and high schools compared with elementary schools. This was true for physical attacks of fights without a weapon, theft/larceny, and vandalism. In general, elementary schools reported proportionately fewer incidents of serious violent crime. They reported lower rates of physical attacks or fights with a weapon and rape or other type of sexual battery when compared with middle schools and high schools. However, while elementary schools reported lower ratios of robbery compared with high schools, they were not significantly different from middle schools".[35]

The "Report on Juvenile Felony Arrests in California, 1998" states:

- The juvenile arrest rate has been higher than the adult arrest rate every year since 1988.
- The arrest rate for robberies is two times higher for juveniles than for adults.
- The juvenile population generally has a lower arrest rate for aggravated assaults than the adult population.
- Since 1990, the juvenile arrest rate for felony weapons offenses has been two times than the adult arrest rate.
- From 1988 to 1998, the juvenile arrest rate for weapons offenses increased 76.1 percent for males, and 172 percent for females.
- From 1988 to 1998, the male juvenile arrest rate declined 25.5 percent, but the female arrest increased 5.5 percent.
- Of all juvenile age groups, the 16-17 year age group had the highest arrest rate in 1998; however, this was a 10.7 percent decline from 1988.

---

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

Appendix 4: Classical Thoughts on Character Education

Scholarly debates on moral development and character formation among philosophers, educators, and the public extend as far back as Aristotle's Nichomacean Ethics and Socrates' Meno. Undoubtedly, classical writers deemed education important. However, even greater emphasis was placed on what constitutes a proper education. According to Aristotle, a proper education included intellectual formation as well as education of the soul.

Since humans are creatures of habit, society must concern itself with constant training of character in order to subordinate appetites to the rule of reason. Training in character would ensure the creation of good citizens and preservation of the regime.

"That the legislator must therefore, make the education of the young his object above all would be disputed by no one. Where this does not happen in cities it hurts the regimes. One should educate with a view to each sort, for the character that is proper to each sort of regime both customarily safeguards the regime and establishes it at the beginning – the democratic character a democracy, for example… and the best character is always a cause of a better regime."[36]

Aristotle thought that students who are habituated in the right ethical virtues would learn to practice discipline, courage, respect and self-control. Aristotle argued that humans are not naturally morally excellent or wise. Humans would become so, if at all, only as the result of a life long personal and community effort.

"Arguments and teaching surely do not influence everyone, but the soul of the student needs to have been prepared by habits for enjoying and hating finely, like ground that is to nourish seed."[37]

Socrates made a similar argument in the Protagoras. Socrates espoused that 'virtue is knowledge'. Socrates explained however, that knowledge is not all virtue. According to Socrates, craft knowledge is not the highest virtue for crafts are morally neutral. Instead, Socrates espouses a 'master craft': knowledge of good and evil. In this light true knowledge is considered virtue.

These writings would later influence the American founding. Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and Benjamin Rush etc. were

---

[36] Lord, Carnes. Aristotle The Politics Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985.

[37] Ross, W.D. Nichomachean Ethics, Book X, Section 9, emphasis added. http: //classics.mit.edu//Aristotle/nichomacean.html

all trained in the classics. As a result, the Founding Fathers thought that character formation and virtue should be included in school curricula. These themes are found throughout the writings of the Founding Fathers and continue to be debated today.

Appendix 5: Character Education In American Public Schools

The decision to create a government based on the will of the people was a sea change in political attitudes in 18th century British Colonies. A smoothly functioning monarchy required only that the inhabitants of the nation submit to the will of the monarchical government. The crafters of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution recognized the ability of all men to play an active role in the government, though a great amount of discussion and debate surrounded a final proclamation in the Constitution endorsing and codifying popular election. Thomas Jefferson noted that ***"Their (citizens) minds must be informed by education what is right and what wrong, must be encouraged in the habits of virtue and deterred from those of vice with the dread of punishments… These are the inculcations necessary to render the people a sure basis for the structure and order of good government."***

Public education was seen as the most effective way to inculcate Americans in the rights and duties of free peoples and representative government. The significance of education in a democratic regime such as America was unparalleled; and in order for a democracy and a republican system to function effectively the citizens of the United Sates, endowed with the power to freely choose their own representatives and leaders, must be educated in citizenship, character and patriotism.

The public education system in the U.S. developed in the 19th century and was created not only to teach reading, writing and arithmetic, but also to solve a variety of social problems such as misbehavior, moral misconduct and upward mobility for all classes. The Founders argued that education was vital for the prosperity and survival of the new nation. Thomas Jefferson notes that education was a "…crusade against ignorance" suggesting that the United States create a system of free schools for all citizens. Until the mid 19th century the US system of education was not a national system but rather one consisting of many local and regional institutions. Religious groups played a major part in these schools and there was no guarantee that any child might receive an education, depending on their locale.

The Founding Fathers regarded education as a means of ensuring an educated and virtuous citizenry. Virtue included the characteristics of self-control and self-assertion, and these qualities are mentioned frequently in the debates of the Constitutional Convention and Federalist Papers. In addition, respect for the common good, adherence to the law, and voluntary civic participation are regarded by the Founders as indispensable to the formation of a proper American citizen. These elements of character are identical to many of the aspects of contemporary character education programs.

Discussion of morals and proper character traits extended beyond the schools and into the speeches, writings, and legislation of American statesman. Congress passed several laws meant to alter the 'moral climate' of the newly formed Union by prohibiting such 'immoral and characterless' activities as licentious speech, vulgar behavior, divorce, and sex out of marriage. The Federal government also discouraged the consumption of alcohol by heavily taxing liquor. Policymakers hoped these actions would help mold and preserve an upright society.

The strong emphasis placed on character development in the U.S. in the 18th and 19th century started to dissolve in the 1950s. A focus on purely academic pursuits supplanted the elements of character curriculum for almost forty years, and only in the last ten years has the public recognized that character education may be a method to relieve some of the social problems affecting American school children. Educating the minds and intellect of children is not the only concern of many parents and educators. The conscience of American school children, having been neglected by both the education system and families, is now a focus of the public school system.[38]

New Englanders Horace Mann and Henry Barnard attempted to increase the opportunity for education for all youth through the common school movement. By 1849, Massachusetts and Connecticut both possessed large numbers of common schools setting the stage for the national movement towards public education for all. Like the Founders, those in the common education movement argued that educating all children would help transform them into virtuous, literate citizens, ready and willing to participate in the government. Common bonds, forged by the schools, could help bring together a rapidly growing and increasingly diverse population.[39] In addition the communities of the 19th century helped reinforce the

---

[38] Kirschenbaum, Howard "A Comprehensive Model For Values Education and Moral Education", *Phi Delta Kappan,* v73 n10, pp77-176, Jun 1992.

[39] Alexis de Toqueville argued in "Democracy In America" that schools, community and voluntary associations would be necessary to keep a democracy functioning smoothly. Without

'character' learned in the schools by maintaining a close-knit identity through recognition of common values such as Christianity, patriotism and discipline.

Although the idea of the common school was not readily accepted by all, common schools at the elementary level were available to all children in America by the end of the 19th century. Adversely many religious groups, most notably Catholics, insisted on running their own private schools. There was a belief that public or common education would not be able to adequately instruct children in proper moral development. The majority of children attended the common schools, but the separate system created by the religious orders still thrives today.

Throughout the 20th century public schools attracted more and more students. Centralization became a popular theme as order and efficiency drove Americans to institute standardizing mechanisms in class placement, length of the school year and the number of years required for attendance. The curricula of schools continued to be formulated by local and state governments. A commonality between the public schools and the religious institutions was the level of moral instruction taught from Biblical passages. Patriotic values, lessons in civic participation and the pledge of allegiance were only a few of the methods used to instruct American students in the character, morals and values they were expected to demonstrate as good citizens of the republic.

During the 1940's schools districts across the USA remained in the hands of local governments. However, the state began to play a larger role in public education by the 1950's. Local property taxes covered much of the costs for public education. In return, this gave considerable control to local communities. The power of local governments however, was superseded by the introduction of state funds. These funds essentially made the educational curriculum part of the larger State governments. The federal government also played a role in centralizing American education by encouraging educational activities deemed to be in the field of common interest, such as vocational programs and agricultural programs in schools. Civil rights laws also required all schools to conform to the nationalized standards of equality in education. It is not only the increased federal commitment to public schools but also the shifts and changes in the social climate that has contributed of the demise of character education in school settings.

Though instruction in character remained a core element in most American Public schools mission until the late 1950's, the introduction of new sociological ideologies began to erode the traditional methods and foundations for instruction

---

a ruling class and with the concepts of equality and liberty a population that did not forge 'common bonds' though intermediary groups could splinter.

in virtue. The 1950's public schools were the vehicle to transmit the core American values to all children. A "civil religion"[40] instructing students in democratic principles, patriotism and common beliefs to students was integral to all public education. The rise of logical positivism and relativism through both social and governmental pressures began to dismantle the traditional, religious based teachings of public educators. So many new cultures and religions had been introduced to the United States since the Founding, that the Christian core values that had created the nation were no longer the only value system practiced. The movement to allow each person to decide their own values came into the education arena in the mid 1960's and some now saw the imposition of values as tantamount to fascism. The pluralistic nature of the citizenry led many educators and administrators to question the types of values that should be taught in the public school and to what extent values need be taught at all. Litigation, as in Murray vs. Curlett only strengthened the anti-virtue education movement as schools no longer said prayers, learned from the Bible or discussed values in terms other than what the individual 'felt' was right for him / her.

The 1960s turned out to be a tumultuous era, both in politics and in education. Assassinations, Vietnam, civil rights and the dismantling of school prayer were part of the American experience. It is important to note that the Founding Fathers along with much of the population of 18th and 19th century America considered religion to be the cornerstone of all education, both in the home and in the school. The Ten Commandments and much of the Bible were the foundations for teaching virtue and character to generations of Americans. Morality ensconced in the teaching of Christian religion was believed to be the most effective way (and at the time the only way) to instill the values demanded by the community, country and a democratic way of life the United States wanted to preserve. Until the Murray vs. Curlett[41] [42] ruling by the Supreme Court most public schools had daily prayers and lessons in virtue, some including biblical lessons from the King James Bible. These lessons did not necessarily focus on the relationship between God, Man, heaven and hell but were more practical; parables, teaching honesty, self-control, kindness and love of country were the focus. An atheist, Mrs. Murray, objected to the materials being taught to her son in the Maryland Public School system and, using the Fourteenth Amendment as the foundation for her argument, insisted that the practice of reading the Bible and praying in school violated her son's rights as well

---

[40] Hodge, R Lewis " A Myriad of Values: A Brief History" Work in Progress, 1989

[41] 374 U.S. 203, 83 S. Ct. 1560

42

as the separation of church and state. Murray won the case and religion, in any form, began its retreat from the realm of the public school.[43]

Values education was no longer instruction in 'proper and necessary values' by the mid 1960s. Replacing traditional instruction were classes in values clarification and 'thinking skills'. The secularization of society and the fear of indoctrinating religious attitudes and beliefs to public school students dramatically shifted the focus on character education from morals and values to the decision making process and moral dilemma discussions. The words "right and wrong" were removed from the vocabulary of instructors as the fear of violation of the First Amendment grew among public school employees.[44]

In the 1980's a Gallop poll noted that the fourth most pressing concern of parents regarding education was the lack of morals and values extant in most school curriculum.[45] The 80's saw educators and parents returning to a more conservative curriculum. Facts and basic skills were focused on in the classrooms. By the 1990's many school districts and several states had begun initiating programs to renew character education programs. Societal problems and the decline of the 'moral climate' of the United States has caused a backlash against formerly popular concepts such as 'choose your own values' and relativism. Programs that assert the rightness of principal values are replacing non-directive programs that were so popular in the 1970's. The programs are not based on a particular religious foundation but are instead based on values that are important to maintaining family, community and the nation. Respect, responsibility, fairness, honest and logic are among these 'revised' values and it is the hope of both parents and educators that social ills will be remedied if a moral heritage can be passed down from generation to generation.

The shift in emphasis in American education from traditional American values to respect for plural value systems combined with an increased focus on scientific reasoning over moral reasoning has culminated in a renewed interest in character development as part of school curriculum. Historian Freeman Butts discusses in "the crisis in education" in his book entitled **The Revival of Civic Learning,** and links the struggle between Unum (one) and Pluribus (many). Butts notes that the good of the many has been overshadowed by the wants and good for the individual. Sociologist Robert Bellah agrees with Butts that the increasing

---

[43] www.atheist.org "School Prayer Decision" Feb 6, 2002

[44] Lickona, Thomas "The Return of Character Education" Education Leadership; v51 n3 p6-11 Nov 1993

[45] Gallup.com

prevalence of character education and morals instruction in the public schools may help reinforce a common core of values that a pluralist society can share while still maintaining individual freedoms.

Teachers, as a part of their professional lives, have always been expected to impart values as part of their ethical and moral responsibility to students. Until the 1960's and 70's the process through which values were taught was the focus of many sociologists and psychologists. The content of the character education lessons, the values taught, has become the focus of debate in the 21st century. The discussion continues as the pluralistic nature of a country comprised of a variety of ethnicities, religions and creeds attempts to define a set of commonly held values and character traits that can be embraced by all citizens. Tradition clashes with modernism and innovation and reason and pragmatism have difficulty reconciling the universality of any given set of values.

About the Authors

Ian Hill~Ian Hill received his Masters Degree in Public Policy with a specialization in International Relations in April 2002. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in International Relations with a minor in History from Boston University in 1999. Following graduation, he hopes to work in the foreign policy field and eventually enter the Foreign Service.

Jennifer. E. Seuss~Jennifer. E. Seuss graduated from Sarah Lawrence College in 1996 with a degree in Comparative Politics. Jennifer worked as a Resident Coordinator and Grant writer for subsidized housing from 1997 through 1999. While at Pepperdine University School of Public Policy she specialized in International Relations and American Studies. Jennifer held an internship at the Aids Service Center of Pasadena during the summer of 2001, writing grants and researching health policy, including international health strategy. Jennifer hopes to have a career in public service working with youth, community planning or in foreign relations.

Alicia Sherman~Alicia Sherman received her Masters Degree in Public Policy with a dual specialization in Economics and Regional Local Policy in April 2002. She received her Bachelors degree in Sociology with a minor in Education from UCLA in 1999. Upon graduating in April she will be an economic analyst with the City of Burbank's Economic Development Division.

Dinesa D. Thomas~Dinesa Thomas received her Masters Degree in Public Policy from Pepperdine University's School of Public Policy with dual emphasis in Economics and Regional Local Policy in April 2002. She received her Bachelors Degree in Political Science and Africana Studies from San Diego State University in 2000. Dinesa is interested in pursuing a career in public service working on domestic policy issues.

Bennie Tinson~Bennie Tinson received his Masters Degree in Public Policy from Pepperdine University in April 2002.

Robin Wilson~Robin Wilson received her Masters Degree in Public Policy from Pepperdine University- School of Public Policy with a dual emphasis in Regional Local Policy and American Politics in April 2002. She received her Bachelors degree in English from Clark Atlanta University in July 2000. Robin aspires to become a civil attorney and ultimately a judge.