PROJECT WISDOM™

PROGRAM EVALUATION
2004

Helping Students Make Wiser Choices
Since 1992

www.projectwisdom.com

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Since 1992, Project Wisdom has been providing schools with character education materials that encourage students to reflect upon the meaning of civic and personal values and the application of those values in their daily lives. The centerpiece of the program is a collection of thought-provoking messages designed to be read over the PA or in-house television system. These messages inspire and teach while fostering a more positive school climate and building morale.

The messages are not dated and are, therefore, recyclable. There are three series of broadcast messages, each containing enough content for an entire school year. All three series come with reproducible components, including a weekly journal for students. The program is very easy to implement and highly cost-effective as a springboard for any schoolwide character education initiative. Each series costs $350 for a lifetime licensing agreement, making the cost for a campus of 600 approximately 58 cents per school year per student. Once a school invests in all three series, they can begin again, at no cost, to rebroadcast the messages. Some schools broadcasting Project Wisdom have been broadcasting for as many as 10 years, incurring no additional cost after the first three years of implementation.

As part of our commitment to understanding the effectiveness of our program, we continue to engage in a scientifically based, rigorous evaluation process. Specifically, with the assistance of our independent program evaluator Dr. Beth Manke, we revised and deployed our annual Web-based survey during the spring of 2004. Dr. Manke is an associate professor at California State University, Long Beach, and has over 12 years of evaluation experience with organizations serving children and families (see Appendix A: About Dr. Beth Manke).

This year's Web-based survey tapped a variety of issues, including general school demographics (e.g., school size and ethnic makeup), program implementation (e.g., whether or not schools use community members as guest narrators), and the impact of Project Wisdom on school climate and student adjustment (e.g., discipline infractions and socio-emotional development). In total, there were 32 questions on the survey, most designed to be rated on a five-point scale (1 = not at all, 2 = a little bit, 3 = somewhat, 4 = quite a bit, 5 = very much).

Licensed schools for which Project Wisdom had been provided an email address were invited to participate. Schools using the program during the 2003-2004 academic year completed a total of 913 surveys. People familiar with the implementation and impact of Project Wisdom responded. Almost half were principals (48%), followed by counselors (26%) and assistant principals (10%). In addition to data gathered via the surveys, this evaluation includes excerpts and testimonials taken directly from student essays submitted for the Project Wisdom Fall 2003 Student Essay Contest. Five hundred forty-nine of the respondents added what were overwhelmingly positive comments. A small sample of those are included in this document. In addition to data gathered via the surveys, this evaluation includes excerpts and testimonials taken directly from student essays submitted for our Fall 2003 Student Essay Contest. Four hundred and twenty schools submitted essays. These schools were limited to submitting only their best six. Excerpts are included, and again, represent only a very small portion of the positive anecdotes and testimonials received.

Key Findings From Evaluation

- Decreases incidents of student teasing and/or bullying.
- Decreases discipline referrals to the office.
- Affects the school climate in a positive way.
- Has a positive impact on teacher morale.
- Increases students' self awareness, social awareness, self management, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.
- Stimulates student conversation about character issues.

Introduction to Findings

The following sections delineate the results of the 2004 survey. First, we present basic descriptive findings in order to characterize the schools currently using Project Wisdom. Second, we outline the general evaluation results concerning program effectiveness. Third, we present more detailed findings concerning the implementation and impact of Project Wisdom. These results help tease out which factors make a difference when one is implementing Project Wisdom and provide insight on how to maximize the effectiveness of the program. Finally, we discuss our ongoing and future plans for program evaluation. Throughout the various sections we also provide direct quotes from school officials regarding the implementation and impact of the program. We believe these qualitative data concerning Project Wisdom help illustrate and complement the quantitative findings obtained with the Web-based survey.

Descriptive Findings

Information from the Web-based survey allows us to characterize those schools that completed the 2004 survey, and specify how Project Wisdom is currently being implemented in schools across the country. Additional descriptive data for all schools that have ever used Project Wisdom (over 11,000 schools) are also presented in this section. This information was extracted from a Customer Pattern Recognition File produced by Market Data Retrieval (MDR), a company of Dunn & Bradstreet. The inclusion of the MDR data allows us to do two things: (1) to examine descriptive information for all schools that ever used Project Wisdom and to explore demographic data (e.g., academic performance) that are difficult to obtain via a Web-based survey completed by school personnel, and (2) to determine if those schools that completed the 2004 Web-based survey are a representative sample of schools that have ever used Project Wisdom. This is done by comparing Web-based survey information such as school size to that provided by MDR.

Chapter 1: School Demographics

Ethnic Composition

Over half of the schools (53%) completing the Web-based survey reported that 1-20% of their student population are minority students. This parallels the ethnic composition of surrounding neighborhoods for all schools that ever used the Project Wisdom program as indicated by the 2004 MDR report.

Geographic Location

According to the Web-based survey, 39% of schools are situated in the suburbs, with an additional 39% in rural settings. Nineteen percent are urban inner-city schools. This descriptive picture of schools currently using Project Wisdom parallels the profile of all schools that have ever used the Project Wisdom program, as reported by MDR and the graph below.

Exhibit 1: Geographic Location Per MDR
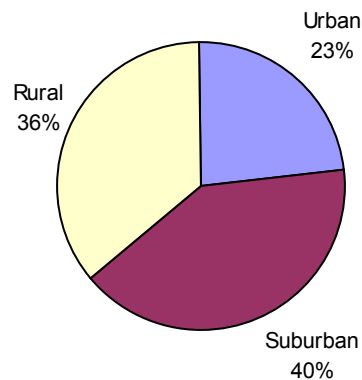
According to MDR, Project Wisdom has been used in all 50 states. Five percent of the schools that have used Project Wisdom are in New York, Florida, and North Carolina. Eight percent of schools are in California, and 14% are in Texas.

Type of School

Ninety-eight percent of schools completing the Web-based survey are public schools. MDR confirms that most schools that have used Project Wisdom are public schools, and further indicates that Project Wisdom has been used to teach character education to students in grades K-12.

Exhibit 2: Type of School Per MDR
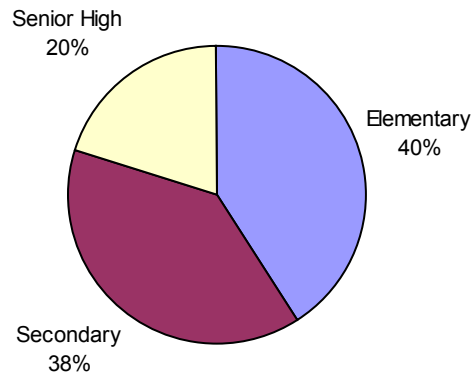
In interpreting the above pie chart, it is important to remember that there are actually fewer senior high schools across the country, as compared to secondary and elementary schools. In fact, there are 52,000 elementary schools across the United States. Eight percent of these schools have used Project Wisdom at some point. In contrast, there are only 15,900 senior high schools in the United States, yet 13% of these schools have used Project Wisdom. Thus, although senior high schools account for a smaller percentage (20%) of all schools that have ever used Project Wisdom, senior high schools that have used the program represent a substantial share of all high schools across the country. In short, these numbers suggest that Project Wisdom has broad application across the school years.

School Size

Ten percent of schools that completed the 2004 Web-based survey have fewer than 300 students enrolled. Twenty-seven percent of schools have between 300 and 500 students, whereas 44% have between 501 and 1000 students and 10% have between 1001 and 1500 students. Very few schools have more than 1500 students (6%). The MDR report suggests that this depiction corresponds closely with the demographic profile for all schools that have used Project Wisdom. Specifically, like the Web-based survey, MDR indicates that 10% of all schools have fewer than 300 students. Twenty-two percent of schools have between 300 and 500 students, 47% of schools have between 501 and 1,000 students, and 20% of schools have more than 1,000 students. In addition, the MDR report notes that over half of the schools that have used Project Wisdom have at least 31 teachers employed at the school. Only 2% of schools have fewer than 10 teachers.

School District Size

The MDR report reveals that schools are situated primarily in moderate-sized school districts.

Exhibit 3: School District Size Per MDR
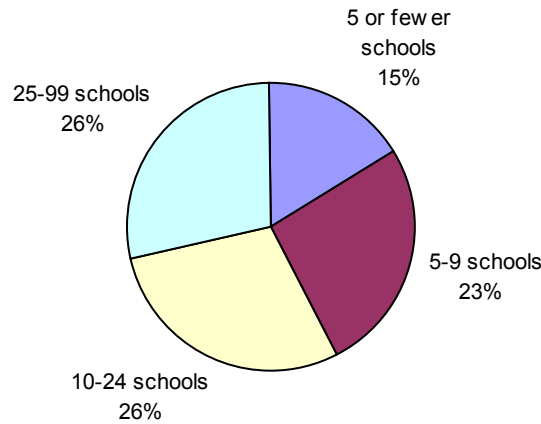
Academic Performance

As indicated by the MDR report, 39% of all schools that have used Project Wisdom have average or above-average student test scores on standardized math and reading tests. Twenty-four percent of schools have below-average math and reading test scores, and about 40% of schools could not be classified.

Student Need

The MDR report reveals that Project Wisdom has been used in schools that service both economically advantaged and economically disadvantaged youth. Specifically, in 15% of schools that have used Project Wisdom, 1-10% of the student population is eligible for free and reduced-price lunches (based on family size and income). In 13% of the schools, 11-20% of students qualify for free and reduced-price lunches; in 13% of schools, 21-30% of students qualify; and in 23% of schools, 31-50% of students qualify. Finally, in 28% of schools that have used Project Wisdom, just over half of the student population is eligible for free and reduced-price lunches (8% of Project Wisdom schools could not be classified).

Chapter 2: Implementation of Project Wisdom

Length of Time Using Project Wisdom

Although almost ¼ of the schools who completed the Web-based survey had been using Project Wisdom products for less than one year (24%), some schools had been using the program for as many as 10 years. Further, 83% of schools state that they use Project Wisdom five days a week.

Exhibit 4: Length of Time Using Program
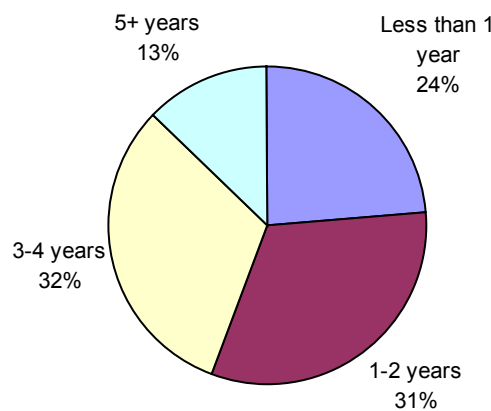
Teachers tell me that the kids are very respectful while I read the Project Wisdom material. Anything that we can do to combat the negative influences with positive influences has to be helpful. Thanks for providing this wonderful resource. It is a real time saver for me, and it is really rich with common sense character building.

Jimmy Glenn, Principal, Kerens Middle School, Kerens, TX

5+ years
13%

Less than 1 year
24%

3-4 years
32%

1-2 years
31%

Person Who Normally Reads the Project Wisdom Messages

In 47% of the schools, the principal or the assistant principal typically reads the Project Wisdom messages. In 25% of the schools, a student normally reads the messages, whereas in 8% of the schools, the principal/assistant principal and a student read the messages together.

Schools That Use Community Members as Guest Narrators

Twenty percent of schools use community guest narrators. Of those that do use community members as guest narrators, over half involve community leaders and city officials.

Exhibit 5: Community Members as Guest Narrators
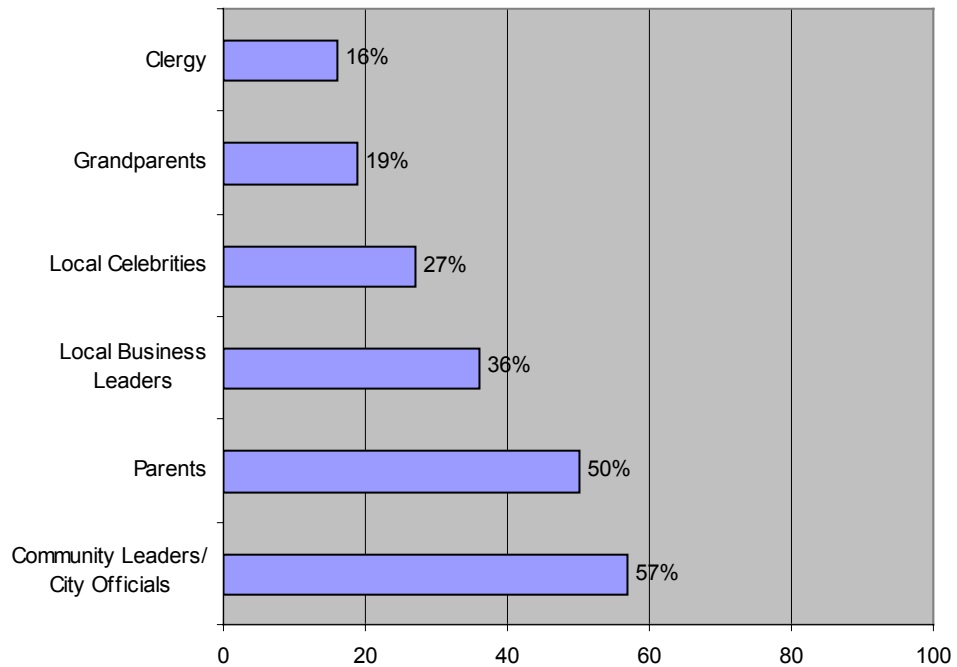
Weekly Journals
Twenty-eight percent of schools use the weekly journals that supplement the Project Wisdom messages. Of those that use the journals, 61% use them weekly and 24% use them as needed. The most typical way that journals are used is in language arts classes, followed by character education classes.

Use of Other Character Education Programs
Sixty-eight percent of schools stated that they used other character education programs in addition to Project Wisdom. Of those that used other character education programs, 39% of schools were using a district or schoolwide character education program.

Implementation of Character Education Teams or Committees
Forty-eight percent of schools formed a character education team or committee.

Introduction of Project Wisdom to Staff and Parents
Seventy percent of schools introduced Project Wisdom to their staff prior to implementation, and 62% informed parents about the program.

In sum, Project Wisdom is being used in all types of public schools across the country — schools in rural and urban settings, small and large schools, and those that educate economically advantaged youth as well as those that work with disadvantaged students. Project Wisdom's messages clearly have broad appeal.

Comparison of our Web-based survey data and the MDR data suggest that schools responding to the 2004 survey are, on average, similar to all schools that have ever used Project Wisdom. This gives us confidence that the findings reported in the following sections are drawn from a representative sample of schools that have used our program. Ultimately, this means that we are better able to generalize the findings in this report and make recommendations for maximizing the benefits of Project Wisdom. The Web-based demographic information also reveals that schools implement Project Wisdom in different ways. Some schools use guest narrators, whereas other schools do not. Some, but not all, schools use weekly journals to supplement the daily messages and work with character education teams to make decisions. This suggests that there is a great deal of flexibility in how schools can implement Project Wisdom. It also means that we have the opportunity to investigate whether or not differences in implementation are related to greater program benefits (see Chapter 4, More Detailed Findings Concerning the Impact of Project Wisdom).

Chapter 3: General Evaluation Results

One of the simplest ways to determine if Project Wisdom has a positive effect on students and the general school climate is to examine how many respondents rated each item on the survey favorably. What follows are the percentages of all respondents who rated each question as "somewhat" (3), "quite a bit" (4), or "very much" (5).

Overall, students have a better attitude toward school and enjoy being here. Academics obviously follow.

Michael Catrillo, Principal, Middle Smithfield Elementary School, East Stroudsburg, PA

Questions	Percent of respondents who indicated "somewhat," "quite a bit," or "very much"
Impact of Program/Perceived Benefits:	
• **The program affects the school climate in a positive way.**	**95%**
Since this has started, I feel that most people in my school have become more compassionate and aware of how their actions affect others. 9th grader, Floral Park, NY	
Project Wisdom has impacted our school for the better. 8th grader, Sterling Heights, MI	
We wanted to use the morning announcements with the texts from Project Wisdom to promote a positive school climate. The serendipity for us was that it not only met our goals but also cut our discipline referrals in half the first year that we used it. Mamie K. Duffendack, Principal, Jordahl Elementary School, Fountain, CO	
When I have substitute teachers in the building, they always stop by my office and comment on the messages given in the morning. I also have coaches that rotate on several campuses and they comment on the positive climate of our school. Judy Davis, Principal, Ben Milam Elementary School, Conroe, TX	
There are less incidents of students disrespecting staff and other students. Lisa Sloop, Counselor, Millingport Elementary School, Albemarle, NC	
• **The program has a positive impact on the morale of teachers.**	**92%**
Teachers particularly, and parents who are here in the morning to hear announcements comment positively on the way it starts their day, and the need to have something positive to think about. Donna Whitley-Smith, Principal, Luray Elementary School, Luray, VA	
. . . teachers enjoy starting their day with the Words of Wisdom. Anne Brown, Principal, Belmont Elementary School, Roanoke Rapids, NC	
. . . teachers come up to me very often and say that the message they heard on that day was meant just for them. Sandi Hazen, Counselor, Frontier Elementary School, Boise, ID	
Not only are the messages uplifting for the students, they brighten my days as well. Peggy B. Clark, Principal, Arsenal Technical High School, Indianapolis, IN	
. . . classroom teachers have stated that they love the program and see it working. Catherine Butler, Teacher, Emerson Elementary School, Butte, MT	

• **The daily messages stimulate student conversation about character issues.** *Some of my friends have even admitted that these words have made them make wiser choices and more responsible people.* 8th grader, Albert Lea, MN *We listened to the Words of Wisdom and discussed them each night.* 11th grader, Paris, KY *One of our valedictorians last year included a mention of the program's slogan "Make It a Great Day..." in his valedictory address.* Mary Sullivan, Librarian, Haughton High School, Haughton, LA *Students often share how they apply the daily messages with others when situations arise.* Anita White, Principal, Littleton Elementary School, Cashion, AZ *Parents of younger students comment on how their child talks about the message at home.* Andrew Laboe, Principal, Parkwood Upjohn Elementary School, Kalamazoo, MI *Students often relay their experiences regarding the daily messsage to me in the cafeteria.* Brad Detering, Principal, Salem Community High School, Salem, IL *Students are better able to discuss issues and assist in developing solutions to conflicts or other character dilemmas.* Lynne M. Ladue, Assistant Principal, Joseph Keels Elementary School, Columbia, SC	**88%**
• **The program increases student self awareness.** *As I am going through my day, a circumstance may arise where a few Words of Wisdom may pop into my head. I ask myself something like, 'Am I belittling a person?' or 'Am I making a wise decision?' Then I think to myself, 'Hey, Words of Wisdom! They really do help! Who knew?'* 8th grader, Mustang, OK *Project Wisdom has helped me through fears and pains. I've been improving in life, more and more, because of Project Wisdom.* 5th grader, Moody, AL *Project Wisdom and Conscious Discipline work hand in hand to increase awareness and skills for students to solve their own problems with respect, understanding and caring. Students have learned empathy and use it appropriately.* Devon Isherwood, Principal, Adams Elementary School, Mesa, AZ *The students know that the responsibility in poor choices lies with them alone. They know that the power to choose is theirs alone.* Pansy Gee, Teacher, Mark Twain Elementary School, Houston, TX	**87%**

• **The program increases student social awareness.**	**89%**

Project Wisdom words give you the spirit to be kind to others or maybe even help others. It makes you want to go to a retirement home and help out seniors. 5th grader, East Stroudsburg, PA

There is more display of respect, not just for other students, but for adults also. An example is that we now have students holding the door for adults, and thinking about how their actions effect others. Kemper Gibson, Teacher, East Chambers Elementary School, Winnie, TX

Getting students to be ready to take responsibility for the consequences of their choices and actions is a huge part of middle school. Project Wisdom provides a consistent message that each individual's life and the entire community is better served when individuals make thoughtful decisions. David Jones, Principal, Eisenhower Middle School, Everett, WA

Students seem to be aware of the elements that make good school citizens and attempt to practice these elements. Calvin E. Barto, Principal, Muncy Jr./Sr. High School, Muncy, PA

I feel this is a great program and encourages students to think about what is going on around them. Susan Gaudet, Principal, Dundee Middle School, Dundee, MI

• **The program increases student self management.**	**86%**

Words of Wisdom [Project Wisdom] have changed my life because sometimes I come in mad. But when Mrs. Wilemon comes over the intercom, it calms me down and makes me happy. I know you may be saying, "Yea, right, that is crazy," but I really do think about calming down and making good choices. 4th grader, Hayden, AL

One thing I have learned is having a positive attitude is having self-control, like if someone made fun of you and you wanted to hit them because you were mad, but you didn't. 4th grader, Ball Ground, GA

When school was over, we were walking down the street about to go to the clothes store where we were going to steal the clothes. I was still thinking about the Project Wisdom message that I had heard at school that day. . . . I told my friend, "No. I'm not going to steal anything, so let's do something else." The Project Wisdom message influenced me to do the right thing and not steal from the clothes store. 7th grader, Mason, West VA

Once students hear the message on being a role model for others, they tend not to cause problems among classmates. They show more respect for their teachers as well. Jeralene, Teacher, Glade View Elementary School, South Bay, FL

Students are more likely to think about the consequences of their actions before carrying them through. Amy Spangaler, Counselor, Chittum Elementary School, Chesapeake, VA

It makes them think before speaking and getting into arguments and yes, even fighting. Joelene Dean, Counselor, Hillcrest High School, Evergreen, AL

On more than one occasion, students have shared with me that they have "thought twice" before behaving in a negative fashion due to the W.O.W. message(s) they had heard on that day. Jim Fornetti, Principal, Iron Mountain Central, Iron Mountain, MI

Students think before acting much more than they used to. They also better understand the impact of their actions on others. Curt Carpenter, Principal, Mississippi Elementary School, Coon Rapids, MN

• **The program increases student relationship skills.**	**87%**

It has changed my attitude on how I act around other people, even my brother. 5th grader, Palisade, CO

One day when I heard the Words of Wisdom about friendship, I went outside and talked to a new girl, Samantha. We became friends because Words of Wisdom helped me to reach out and be a friend. 1st grader, Pinnacle, NC

The day I heard Project Wisdom on friendship, I thought about how to treat friends and how they treat me. I learned that I might make new friends by sitting with other people at lunch. After a couple of weeks, I realized I had become more social with friends, and I even had made a couple of new friends. 6th grader, Birmingham, MI

I am respectful to my teacher and the kids in school. The Words of Wisdom have made a difference in my life because I have learned respect. 2nd grader, Danbury, CT

Because of Project Wisdom, I have more friends. 5th grader, Hayden, AL

Those words gave me a whole new light about our argument and we resolved it right after class. 8th grader, Mustang, OK

We have had many students who have been kinder to others or to show random acts of kindness as a result of beginning the day with a message that was related to that topic. Denise R. Smith, Principal, Robert Smalls Middle School, Beaufort, SC

As students develop their abilities to see "outside of themselves" and to see others' perspectives, they are more able to solve conflicts in a positive way. Barbara Luther, Teacher, Eleanor Roosevelt High School, Greenbelt, MD

• **The program improves student responsible decision making.**	**86%**

Project Wisdom has changed my life because I am responsible for my own homework. 2nd grader, Danbury, CT

I have learned many things from the "Words of Wisdom" [Project Wisdom], on the announcements. It has taught me to be responsible in everything that I do. I have become more responsible both in school and at home. I put more effort into my homework and I am able to see the results of that in the classroom. 4th grader, Battle Ground, IN

Instead of copying from a friend, or using the Internet, Words of Wisdom have helped to encourage me to continue to take the time and the responsibility of completing it myself. 11th grader, Fulton, NY

... many of our students are more inclined to think before acting. This has not always been the case. They recognize that there are higher expectations for behavior and performance both in and outside the classroom. These higher expectations are communicated through our Project Wisdom Messages. Clinton H. Giles, Principal, Capital High School, Charleston, WV

During the course of the year, several students have found valuable items including money and have turned them in to the office, usually with a remark about how they made the choice to do the right thing. Ramon E. Rivera, Principal, Eastwood Knolls Elementary School, El Paso, TX

• **The program helps decrease student teasing and/or bullying.**	**78%**

I think that "Words of Wisdom" [Project Wisdom] really helped our school to have fewer fights, to have less bullies and just plainly made our school a better place to be! 5th grader, Coleman, MI

Now I have learned to change. Every time I hear teasing, I always tell the bully that it is wrong to insult others. This feeling allows me to have an excellent day, knowing what I did was right. 5th grader, East Stroudsberg, PA

Student suspensions have been reduced considerably as have referrals for bully type incidents. Dr. Linda G. MacNeal, Principal, East Ward Elementary School, Downingtown, PA

Our administration and staff have witnessed a drastic reduction in bullying and other anti-social behaviors among our students. We have seen students become more helpful and kind to one another and our staff. Elizabeth Davis, Principal, Gretna Junior High School, Gretna, LA

We have noticed that cases of bullying and hazing decrease as the students are exposed more to our character ed. initiatives. Kathy Rexford, Assistant Principal, Lancaster High School, Lancaster, OH

Overall, I think the program serves as a daily reminder for students to be more tolerant of one another, and this, in turn, has decreased our number of small bickerings, quarrels, and matters involving harassment. Brenda Frankart, Principal, Liberty-Benton High School, Findlay, OH

Less referrals regarding bullying and teasing. Brenda Janik, Dean of Students, McGee Middle School, Berlin, CT

• **The program helps decrease discipline referrals to the office.**	**67%**

The Words of Wisdom changed me from getting suspended so much and from getting detentions everyday and from not being nice to people. 5th grader, Oak Hill, FL

About 50% lower numbers of referrals this year compared to last year. Rose Marie Biddle, Counselor, Denton Elementary School, Denton, MD

We are now in year two of using Project Wisdom, and we have cut our office referrals for discipline in HALF over the last two years. I believe that Project Wisdom has been a big part of that reduction. The Words of Wisdom message to start off the day creates a positive building climate. Gary Foulke, Principal, Overbrook Attendance Center, Overbrook, KS

Discipline referrals are almost non existent at this point in a K-5 elementary school. When they do occur, the students and their teachers and I are able to share a common language, as we frequently reference the message of the day. Often, the children offer that reference first! Janine Lavery, Principal, Alleghany Avenue School, Lindenhurst, NY

Teachers are more confident in dealing with student issues and can use the program as a springboard for discussions. Referrals have decreased by 10% since the beginning of the year. Sue Hildebrand, Thornton Elementary School, Temple, TX

In our third year of use, we are seeing a reduction of 30% from last school year in discipline referrals. Duane Kline, Principal, Jackson High School, Jackson, GA

The high ratings on all questions suggest that a majority of schools officials feel that Project Wisdom is having positive effects on their students and the school climate. Specifically, over 90% of schools believe that the program improves the school climate, and over 85% believe that it enhances students' socio-emotional functioning in a number of areas (e.g., self awareness). Although somewhat fewer schools believe that the school has decreased teasing/bullying and discipline referrals, it should be noted that the above percentages incorporate all schools that completed the 2004 Web-based survey, including those that used the program for less than six months. Even though most schools probably

see immediate benefits from using Project Wisdom, especially in areas such as morale and school climate, it may take longer than six or nine months for these improvements in the school environment to translate into better student behavior.

Does Project Wisdom impact the larger community?

Additional information from the Web-based survey reveals that 75% of the schools (681) reported that they received positive feedback from parents and community members concerning Project Wisdom. Only 5% of schools (47) reported that they received any negative feedback from parents and community members about the program. Parent complaints, as noted by school personnel, typically had to do with how schools implemented the program (e.g., not consistently using the messages) rather than the content of the program. These numbers are particularly remarkable when you consider the fact that most people provide feedback only when they are dissatisfied. The fact that ¾ of the schools reported receiving positive feedback from parents and community members is a testimony to the overall satisfaction with Project Wisdom.

Although this program was produced for a student audience, educators frequently report that the messages make a positive impact on parents and community members as well as students.

You will receive positive feedback from faculty, parents, students, and people of the community when they can see for themselves the positiveness in their children. They will call and/or tell you about the change that has been made. Joelene Dean, Counselor, Hillcrest High School, Evergreen, AL

Parents enjoy hearing the daily words of wisdom if they are in the building and have stated that they think it is a wonderful part of the day. They like the fact that all staff (admin. office, teachers, custodians and cafeteria staff) read and create a community. Tom Veronesi, Assistant Principal, Willard Elementary School, Berlin, CT

Parents are often in the building when the morning lesson is presented. I often have comments thanking me for taking time to teach life lessons that promote positive behaviors and instill collective community spirit and values. Pamela Crookedacre, Woodworth Elementary School, Leslie, MI

Chapter 4: More Detailed Findings Concerning the Impact of Project Wisdom

Although Project Wisdom has a positive effect on both school climate and student adjustment, certain school characteristics may be associated with greater program effectiveness. Following are specific questions that were addressed in the analyses. For all questions, analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted using school characteristics and implementation practices (e.g., school uses weekly journals or not) as independent variables and school climate and student adjustment as dependent variables. Tukey follow-up tests were used to determine the specific areas of statistical difference. All analyses were conducted using the 8.0 version of SAS, a widely used statistical package in the social sciences.

Put simply, these follow-up analyses allow us to "drill down" or disaggregate the data in a way that teases out those factors that make a difference when one implements Project Wisdom. The findings provide clues to understanding how to increase the effectiveness of Project Wisdom, at the level of both product development and school implementation.

Students have gone home and told parents about specific messages, which parents felt were good.

Jocelyn Levan,
Counselor,
Middleburg Elementary
School,
Middleburg, PA

Do principals report more positive outcomes than other respondents to the survey?

Yes. Not only were principals more likely to complete the surveys than any other school official, they were also more likely, in almost every case, to report greater benefits to using Project Wisdom. That is, for example, principals were more likely, as compared to counselors and assistant principals, to report that students experienced great improvements in responsible decision making as a result of using Project Wisdom (see Table 1 for detailed findings). Principals may be more likely to report positive effects of the program because they are better able to gauge the overall impact of Project Wisdom. That is, principals may have a more global view of what is going on at the school as it is their job to coordinate students, teachers, staff, and community involvement. In contrast, counselors, who often work primarily with students (particularly students who are having trouble) may be less in tune with the overall impact of schoolwide educational programs like Project Wisdom.

Do schools that have more (or less) ethnic diversity report more positive outcomes?

No. In no case was the ethnic diversity of the student population related to perceived improvements in school climate and student adjustment (see Table 2 for detailed findings). Thus it appears that Project Wisdom is equally effective in enhancing education in schools that lack ethnic diversity as compared to those schools with more ethnic diversity. The only significant finding related to ethnic diversity was in terms of positive feedback regarding the program. Schools with less ethnic diversity reported greater positive feedback from parents and community members. This is in line with previous research suggesting that non-minority parents are more likely to get involved in their children's education by "brokering" for their children with school staff and administrators.

Do suburban schools (as compared to rural and inner-city schools) report more positive outcomes?

No. In no case was school location associated with perceived benefits to using Project Wisdom (see Table 3 for detailed findings). Suburban, rural, and inner-city schools reported similar outcomes.

Do smaller schools report more positive outcomes?

In only one case did perceptions of the benefits of using Project Wisdom differ by the size of the school (see Table 4 for detailed findings). Smaller schools reported greater decreases in discipline referrals as a result of using Project Wisdom.

Do schools that have been using the program for a longer period of time report more positive outcomes?

Yes, schools that have been using the program longer reported more positive outcomes (see Table 5 for detailed findings). Follow-up analyses, however, reveal that the main differences lie in those schools that have used the program for six months or less and those that have used Project Wisdom longer. Specifically, schools that have been using the program longer than six months see the most dramatic benefits to student self awareness, social awareness, self management, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. In addition, these schools that have been using the program for a longer period of time reported greater decreases in discipline referrals and decreases in teasing and/or bullying. It is important to note that even those schools that have used the program less than six months see benefits, as indicated by average ratings above 2.0. In addition,

It is so encouraging to have parents, teachers and students come to my office and tell me how much they support the program.

Mary Ellen Sedlacek, Assistant Principal, Kleb Intermediate School, Spring, TX

those schools that have used the program for several years (as many as 10 years) also continue to see benefits to school climate and student adjustment. This is important as it suggests that there are both immediate and long-lasting benefits to using the program.

Do schools that use the program every day of the week report more positive outcomes than schools that use the program less often?

Yes, there are a few differences between schools that use Project Wisdom every day and those that use it less often (see Table 6 for detailed findings). That is, schools that use the daily messages more days a week reported greater increases in student social and self awareness and a greater positive impact on the morale of teachers and the general school climate.

Do schools that use the weekly journals report more positive outcomes? Further, do those schools that use them regularly (as opposed to using them on an "as needed" basis) report even more positive outcomes?

Yes, those schools that use the weekly journals reported more positive outcomes as a result of using Project Wisdom (see Table 7 for detailed findings). Specifically, schools that use the journals reported that using Project Wisdom has had a greater impact on student self awareness, social awareness, self management, and relationship skills. In addition, schools that use journals also reported a greater boost to the school climate and teacher morale, more student conversation about character issues, and a greater decrease in student teasing and/or bullying. Additional comparisons between those that never use journals, those that use them on an "as needed basis," and those that use them weekly revealed that the main differences seems to lie in using them versus not using them at all.

Exhibit 6: Average Rating for Use of Weekly Journals
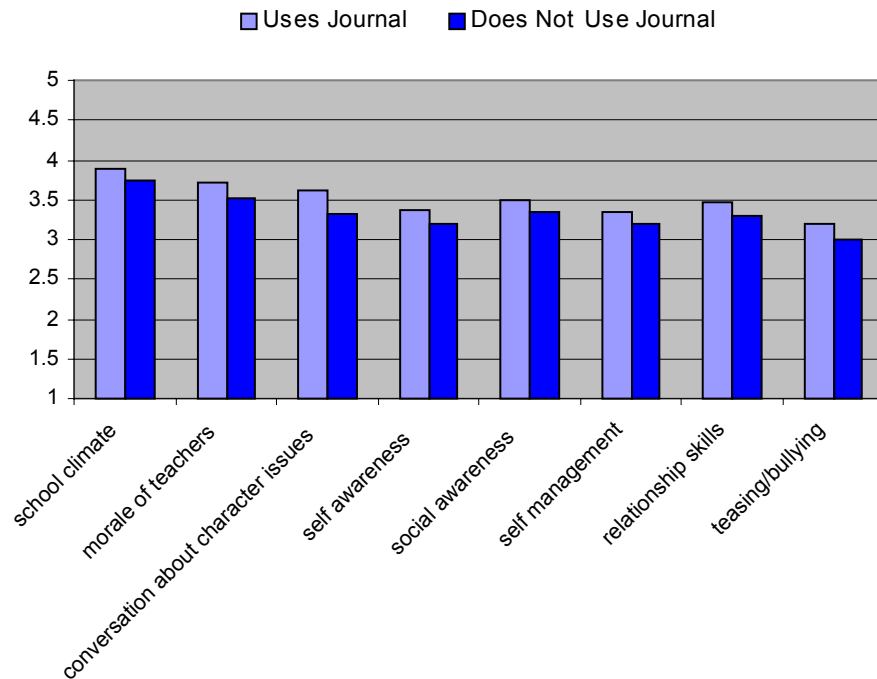
1 = not at all, 2 = a little, 3 = somewhat, 4 = quite a bit, 5 = very much

Do schools that use other character education programs in addition to Project Wisdom report more positive outcomes?

Yes. Not surprisingly, schools that reported using other character education programs in addition to Project Wisdom reported greater benefits/positive outcomes (see Table 8 for detailed findings). Specifically, schools that reported using other character education programs (as compared to those who don't) reported greater increases in students' self awareness, social awareness, self management skills, and relationship skills. In addition, schools that use other character education programs in addition to Project Wisdom also reported greater positive impact on school climate and teacher morale, greater student conversation about character education issues, and greater declines in teasing and/or bullying and discipline referrals to the office.

Do schools that have character education teams or committees report more positive outcomes?

Yes, on all outcomes, schools which have character education teams or committees reported greater positive outcomes (see Table 8 for detailed findings). These schools see greater improvements in students' socio-emotional functioning, school climate, and teacher morale as a result of using Project Wisdom. These schools that have character education teams or committees also see greater declines in teasing/bullying and discipline referrals.

Exhibit 7: Average Rating for Use of Character Education Team

1 = not at all, 2 = a little, 3 = somewhat, 4 = quite a bit, 5 = very much

Do schools that inform their staffs about Project Wisdom prior to implementation report more positive outcomes?

In a few cases, yes (see Table 9 for detailed findings). Schools that informed their staffs about Project Wisdom prior to implementation reported greater improvements in student social awareness and relationship skills. They also reported that the daily messages stimulated more student conversation about character issues. It is unclear from our results, however, whether or not informing staff about Project Wisdom was accomplished in the context of a broader staff training concerning character education. Experts in the character education field have come to realize that character education programs may be most effective when they are preceded by staff development that addresses not only the implementation of the specific program in question but also the rationale behind and general focus of character education. Our future efforts to evaluate Project Wisdom will include a more detailed assessment of staff development related to character education and the implementation of Project Wisdom.

Do schools that inform parents about Project Wisdom report more positive outcomes?

Yes, in every case, schools that informed parents about Project Wisdom reported greater benefits to using Project Wisdom as compared to those schools that did not inform parents (see Table 9 for detailed findings).

Do schools that use community guest narrators report more positive outcomes?

Yes, in many cases, schools that use community guest narrators reported more positive outcomes (see Table 10 for detailed findings). Specifically, schools that use community guest narrators report seeing greater improvements in students' self awareness, social awareness, self management, and relationship skills. These schools also reported that the daily messages stimulate more conversation about character issues. Finally, these schools also report that the use of Project Wisdom has brought about greater decreases in teasing and/or bullying and discipline referrals to the office.

Does Project Wisdom boost teacher morale?

Research shows that morale impacts achievement. When teachers, staff, and students work in a positive school climate, students learn more effectively and teacher retention improves. Effective schools create a strong sense of community, which in turn fosters higher levels of student learning. Project Wisdom schools report that the program has a positive effect on both school climate and teacher morale. For more information about the connection between morale and achievement, please refer to the Supporting Evidence section of this document. To review testimonials about teacher morale, see Chapter 3: General Evaluation Results.

In sum, school demographics are unrelated to greater or lesser program benefits. That is, for example, having more or less ethnic diversity or being situated in suburban rather than urban settings does not impact the effectiveness of Project Wisdom. It appears that all types of schools can benefit equally from the program. In contrast, several aspects of program implementation are related to greater program benefits. Specifically, schools that continue to use the program for at least six months, develop character education teams, use the supplemental weekly journals, utilize other character education programs in conjunction with Project Wisdom, inform parents about the program prior to implementation, and involve community members as guest narrators report the most positive program effects. In short, schools that exhibit a profile of commitment to character education and connectivity to the community experience the greatest benefits of Project Wisdom.

Chapter 5: Further Qualitative Evidence

Since 1997, Project Wisdom has sponsored a yearly national student essay contest in which we pose the follow question: "How has Project Wisdom made a difference in your life?" These essays generate stories and personal accounts that support our quantitative findings because students are given the opportunity to provide unscripted accounts of how Project Wisdom impacts their lives. In 2004, 106 different schools from across the country submitted a total of 420 essays. Schools were limited to six of their best essays per campus because our small staff serves as the judging panel. Each essay was submitted with parental consent and permission to publish the essay "either in its entirety or in excerpt in the Project Wisdom newsletter, its Web site, or in other promotional materials." Essays were judged on relevance to theme, composition, creativity, sincerity, and grammar. K-8 winners received a $500 U.S. Savings Bond. The high school winner received a $500 scholarship. Honorable mentions received $25 gift certificates to McDonalds. The winning essays and Honorable Mentions from all previous years are posted at http://www.projectwisdom.com/results/index_essay_stu.htm.

The following excerpts are taken from essays submitted prior to December 15, 2003, and judged in January 2004. These represent only a fraction of the positive testimonials and anecdotes taken from the 420 student essays.

By Christian, 4th grader
Words of Wisdom have changed my life because sometimes I come in mad. But when Mrs. Wilemon comes over the intercom, it calms me down and makes me happy. I know you may be saying, "Yea, right, that is crazy." But I really do think about calming down and making good choices.

By Lisa, 8th grader
We want some say over what happens in our lives. What's different about Project Wisdom is that it isn't telling us what to do, it's giving us a choice. Kids are capable of making good choices; we just need to know that there are other alternatives out there. Project Wisdom gives those alternatives without getting preachy or being too

condescending. If you want a kid to grow up to be a responsible adult, you don't tell them what to do you give them the tools to make the good choices on their own. Project Wisdom offers us these tools. The choice is ours on how we use them.

By Christopher, 9th grader

Everyday I go to tutor people instead of going to my lunch period. Instead of eating lunch with my friends I help people with their studies. I think that this is a good way to contribute to my school instead of asking my school to do something for me. I enjoy helping people get better grades and learn more. When I am helping these people I always think of those inspiring quotes I heard that morning in my homeroom. I know that I am making a difference in the world just as others have done before me. I feel satisfaction in helping so many people make their lives better.

... This program gives students a way to think about their lives and the lives of others. Students will become more aware of how others feel and become more caring. If kids start helping others with their problems the world will see less problems. The program offers a way to make many different lives better.

By Mellori, 11th grader

Imagine being stressed over discord in a student club meeting. A community service project must be completed in the coming month, but club members cannot agree on a venue for the project. Tension mounts between the members and the meeting ends abruptly. The next day, many members are disparate because not much was accomplished. But, as they sit meditatively in their class, a familiar voice comes over the PA system. An excerpt about understanding great ideas and the value of diversity and cooperation is read over the intercom, and the antics of the previous day seem quite silly. Many of the club members decide to meet again. One member tells the impact of the morning's Project Wisdom message had on their vision for the community service project.

By Emma, 11th grader

Throughout the week of October 27-31, the Words of Wisdom discussed drugs, the consequences, and the effects. These were the set of words that had the greatest impact on my life. Actually, they changed the life of a close friend, which lifted a huge weight and a lot of stress off of me. Discovering that a friend you thought you knew well was on drugs is a big surprise. You feel betrayed almost because he kept something from you. This is exactly how I felt when I heard through a mutual friend that my closest friend was taking drugs.

After hearing this, I confronted him. The truth was admitted and I was stunned. I tried to explain to him how much I loved him and why drugs were going to mess up his life. Of course he refused to listen until he heard it elsewhere.

On the first day of Drug Awareness Week and after hearing the "Words of Wisdom," I saw my friend in the hallway. He looked me in the eyes for the first time in a long time. I knew right away that those 30 seconds of words that morning had changed his mind. For the next four days we listened to the Words of Wisdom and discussed them each night. He finally realized how life threatening and altering drugs of any type could be. My friend made a decision to stop using drugs and I committed my time fully to supporting him.

Even though I was not able to be the one to reform him, knowing that his life would be better soon was just as great of a feeling. I love my friends so much and I feel their pain and their stress. Since the Words of Wisdom impacted his life, it changed mine as well.

Chapter 6: Ongoing and Future Evaluation Efforts

I have had parents catch me on campus or around town that will tell me what an impact it [Project Wisdom] has had on their children.

Lauren Boston,
Counselor,
Dilley Elementary
School,
Dilley, TX

Project Wisdom will continue to survey schools on a yearly basis in order to obtain feedback regarding the effects of the program. We are committed to understanding the ways in which the program enhances school environments and students' success. In addition, we believe that it is important to pinpoint how schools can maximize program effectiveness and to communicate this to our customers.

We are also embarking on another evaluation project in response to the U.S. Department of Education's recently distributed guide, *Identifying and Implementing Educational Practices Supported By Rigorous Evidence: A User Friendly Guide*. In the fall of 2004, we will begin a pre-test/post-test study of Project Wisdom's impact on discipline referrals. Specifically, we will collect discipline data from schools that have used Project Wisdom for at least two years. Schools will be asked to supply discipline data for the year prior to program implementation, the year of implementation, and the year following program implementation. By comparing discipline rates across the three years, we can determine the degree to which decreases in discipline problems are the result of using Project Wisdom. The benefits of using this pre-test/post-test follow-up to our Web-based survey are that it allows for the examination of objective data that is external to the school administrators' opinions and it provides a unique opportunity to look at the changes in school and student functioning over time.

We recognize that collecting discipline data from schools is an ambitious task. Schools often document and organize their discipline data differently, and we will have to work with each participating school to retrieve data that can be used in conjunction with data collected from other schools. Despite the time and effort it will take, we are committed to this project as we believe it can help us illustrate the ways in which Project Wisdom benefits students and schools. Further, we know that the lessons we learn along the way can benefit others who are trying to evaluate their programs.

Finally, we will conduct a qualitative study of Project Wisdom in the fall of 2004. Both the current Web-based survey and the proposed pre-test/post-test study of discipline referrals are quantitative in that they involve empirical validation of program effects (i.e., assigning numerical estimates to a program's impact). Although these quantitative evaluation efforts are crucial for demonstrating Project Wisdom's impact, we recognize that it may be difficult to isolate some of the strengths of the program with traditional quantitative methods as Project Wisdom was designed, in part, to serve as a catalyst or foundation for comprehensive character education initiatives. One of Project Wisdom's greatest strengths may be in the change that it promotes — a change that is difficult to assess with the purely quantitative practices used thus far. Thus, it makes sense to supplement our current evaluation efforts with qualitative evaluation procedures. To accomplish this, we will conduct direct observations at a school in Long Beach, CA, as the school implements Project Wisdom. We will observe and interview students, teachers, and staff regarding the program and its effects. We will also document our impressions of teacher morale, general understanding of character education, and student behavior.

Chapter 7: Program Evaluation History Prior to Third-Party Evaluation

History

Prior to Dr. Manke's involvement in data analysis and reporting, the company took a research approach to evaluating our program by collecting both qualitative and quantitative data.

Quantitative Data

2000: Distributed a written survey by mail to all licensed schools in order to assess effectiveness of the program. Please see Appendix B for the results.

2001: Distributed written surveys through the mail. Please see Appendix C for the results.

2002: Launched the first Web-based survey distributed to all licensed Project Wisdom schools for which we had an email address. Please see Appendix D for the results.

2003: Launched the second Web-based survey distributed to all licensed Project Wisdom schools for which we had an email address. Please see Appendix E for the results.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Character education helps shape the attitudes and behaviors of young people, fostering an internal motivation to make wiser choices. Project Wisdom will continue to survey licensed schools on a yearly basis as a means of both assessing our effectiveness and providing educators with the opportunity to provide us with valuable feedback. We will also continue to gather important qualitative data from the essays that students submit each year for our annual essay contest. However, after careful consideration, we have ruled out the notion of implementing more complicated evaluation procedures because of the variety of problems it would present and the cost to our small business. The data we have collected over the years ensures us that we are providing students and educators with a program that is affordable and that gets results.

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Table 1: Means (and Standard Deviations) for Improvement in School Environment, Student Socio-Emotional Adjustment, and Discipline Infractions by Reporter

Principals were more likely to complete the surveys than any other school official, they were also more likely, in almost every case, to report greater benefits to using Project Wisdom.

	Principals (n = 435)	Counselors (n = 235)	Assistant Principals (n = 87)	
Improvements in School Environment				
• School climate	3.91 A (.79)	3.70 B (.83)	3.54 B (.96)	$F_{(4,902)} = 6.33$, $p < .001$
• Morale of teachers	3.69 A (.83)	3.45 B (.94)	3.49 (.85)	$F_{(4,902)} = 3.60$, $p < .01$
• More student conversation about character issues	3.49 (.87)	3.32 (.94)	3.37 (.97)	$F_{(4,902)} = 2.37$, $p = ns$
Increases in Socio-Emotional Skills				
• Self awareness	3.35 A (.80)	3.19 (.84)	3.13 B (.81)	$F_{(4,902)} = 4.95$, $p < .001$
• Social awareness	3.53 A (.86)	3.30 B (.91)	3.26 B (.84)	$F_{(4,902)} = 6.05$, $p < .001$
• Self management	3.39 A (.83)	3.10 B (.92)	3.04 B (.89)	$F_{(4,902)} = 6.35$, $p < .001$
• Relationship skills	3.51 A (.84)	3.22 B (.98)	3.23 (.90)	$F_{(4,902)} = 7.56$, $p < .001$
• Responsible decision making	3.56 A (.85)	3.20 B (.98)	3.25 B (.94)	$F_{(4,902)} = 10.83$, $p < .001$
Declines in Discipline Problems				
• Teasing/bullying	3.19 A (.86)	2.91 B (.91)	3.00 (.93)	$F_{(4,902)} = 4.91$, $p < .001$
• Discipline referrals to office	3.00 A (1.00)	2.91 B (.91)	3.00 (.93)	$F_{(4,902)} = 8.73$, $p < .001$

(1 = not at all, 2 = a little, 3 = somewhat, 4 = quite a bit, 5 = very much)
A B Different letters indicate significantly different means for that analytic comparison across reporters (principals, counselors, and assistant principals).
ns = nonsignificant

Table 2: Means (and Standard Deviations) for Improvement in School Environment, Student Socio-Emotional Adjustment, and Discipline Infractions by Ethnic Diversity

In no case was the ethnic diversity of the student population related to perceived improvements in school climate.

	1-20% minority students (n = 486)	21-40% minority students (n = 148)	41-60% minority students (n = 93)	61-80% minority students (n = 68)	81-100% minority students (n = 79)	
Improvements in School Environment						
• School climate	3.77 (.84)	3.87 (.75)	3.71 (.79)	3.90 (.79)	3.77 (.92)	$F_{(4,869)} = .98$, $p = ns$
• Morale of teachers	3.57 (.86)	3.71 (.83)	3.48 (.87)	3.57 (.97)	3.59 (.90)	$F_{(4,869)} = 1.12$, $p = ns$
• More student conversation about character issues	3.42 (.92)	3.42 (.88)	3.27 (.85)	3.53 (.82)	3.29 (.96)	$F_{(4,869)} = 1.08$, $p = ns$
Increases in Socio-Emotional Skills						
• Self awareness	3.23 (.87)	3.31 (.82)	3.18 (.86)	3.40 (.69)	3.15 (.78)	$F_{(4,869)} = 1.18$, $p = ns$
• Social awareness	3.40 (.89)	3.44 (.93)	3.29 (.90)	3.53 (.82)	3.30 (.81)	$F_{(4,869)} = 1.01$, $p = ns$
• Self management	3.22 (.89)	3.33 (.87)	3.19 (.84)	3.31 (.83)	3.09 (.92)	$F_{(4,869)} = 1.18$, $p = ns$
• Relationship skills	3.36 (.91)	3.44 (.87)	3.24 (.93)	3.38 (.88)	3.19 (1.01)	$F_{(4,869)} = 1.34$, $p = ns$
• Responsible decision making	3.35 (.97)	3.43 (.88)	3.27 (.85)	3.53 (.82)	3.29 (.96)	$F_{(4,869)} = 1.14$, $p = ns$
Declines in Discipline Problems						
• Teasing/bullying	3.06 (.89)	3.13 (.86)	2.91 (.89)	3.25 (.82)	2.99 (.88)	$F_{(4,869)} = 1.83$, $p = ns$
• Discipline referrals to office	2.80 (1.07)	2.75 (.99)	2.68 (1.06)	3.06 (.90)	2.75 (.97)	$F_{(4,869)} = 1.53$, $p = ns$

(1 = not at all, 2 = a little, 3 = somewhat, 4 = quite a bit, 5 = very much)
ns = nonsignificant

Table 3: Means (and Standard Deviations) for Improvement in School Environment, Student Socio-Emotional Adjustment, and Discipline Infractions by Geographic Location

In no case was school location associated with perceived benefits to using Project Wisdom.

	Suburban (n = 360)	Rural (n = 353)	Urban (n = 172)	
Improvements in School Environment				
• School climate	3.79 (.87)	3.79 (.79)	3.77 (.88)	$F (2,882) = .02,$ $p = ns$
• Morale of teachers	3.61 (.89)	3.59 (.84)	3.55 (.94)	$F (2,882) = .21,$ $p = ns$
• More student conversation about character issues	3.47 (.93)	3.35 (.91)	3.39 (.95)	$F (2,882) = 1.43,$ $p = ns$
Increases in Socio-Emotional Skills				
• Self awareness	3.23 (.90)	3.23 (.83)	3.30 (.80)	$F (2,882) = .46,$ $p = ns$
• Social awareness	3.41 (.95)	3.37 (.83)	3.37 (.94)	$F (2,882) = .24,$ $p = ns$
• Self management	3.25 (.89)	3.27 (.86)	3.20 (.98)	$F (2,882) = .35,$ $p = ns$
• Relationship skills	3.36 (.96)	3.34 (.89)	3.34 (.94)	$F (2,882) = .06,$ $p = ns$
• Responsible decision making	3.39 (.93)	3.26 (.96)	3.38 (.96)	$F (2,882) = .48,$ $p = ns$
Declines in Discipline Problems				
• Teasing/bullying	3.07 (.90)	3.06 (.88)	3.05 (.90)	$F (2,882) = .02,$ $p = ns$
• Discipline referrals to office	2.82 (1.07)	2.78 (1.01)	2.77 (1.06)	$F (2,882) = .19,$ $p = ns$

(1 = not at all, 2 = a little, 3 = somewhat, 4 = quite a bit, 5 = very much)
ns = nonsignificant

Table 4: Means (and Standard Deviations) for Improvement in School Environment, Student Socio-Emotional Adjustment, and Discipline Infractions by School Size

In only one case did perceptions of the benefits of using Project Wisdom differ by the size of the school.

	100-300 students (n = 101)	300-500 students (n = 247)	500-1000 students (n = 397)	1000-1500 students (n= 94)	1500+ students (n = 50)	
Improvements in School Environment						
• School climate	3.89 (.76)	3.77 (.79)	3.79 (.84)	3.81 (.91)	3.64 (.80)	$F_{(4,884)} = .85$, $p = ns$
• Morale of teachers	3.70 (.78)	3.61 (.82)	3.54 (.91)	3.59 (.92)	3.64 (.80)	$F_{(4,884)} = .85$, $p = ns$
• More student conversation about character issues	3.43 (.95)	3.39 (.89)	3.39 (.94)	3.45 (.95)	3.40 (.76)	$F_{(4,884)} = .12$, $p = ns$
Increases in Socio-Emotional Skills						
• Self awareness	3.34 (.82)	3.29 (.87)	3.20 (.85)	3.25 (.81)	3.14 (.86)	$F_{(4,884)} = .97$, $p = ns$
• Social awareness	3.46 (.97)	3.46 (.85)	3.35 (.90)	3.93 (.92)	3.30 (.93)	$F_{(4,884)} = .84$, $p = ns$
• Self management	3.30 (.99)	3.29 (.88)	3.22 (.89)	3.24 (.74)	3.02 (.94)	$F_{(4,884)} = 1.10$, $p = ns$
• Relationship skills	3.45 (.99)	3.36 (.88)	3.33 (.91)	3.31 (.95)	3.20 (1.07)	$F_{(4,884)} = .76$, $p = ns$
• Responsible decision making	3.50 (.99)	3.42 (.88)	3.34 (.97)	3.30 (.93)	3.10 (.84)	$F_{(4,884)} = 1.96$, $p = ns$
Declines in Discipline Problems						
• Teasing/bullying	3.13 (.76)	3.14 (.89)	2.99 (.90)	3.09 (.96)	3.00 (.88)	$F_{(4,884)} = 1.42$, $p = ns$
• Discipline referrals to office	3.03 [A] (.99)	2.87 (1.04)	2.73 (1.05)	2.64 (1.07)	2.62 [B] (.95)	$F_{(4,884)} = 2.86$, $p < .05$

(1 = not at all, 2 = a little, 3 = somewhat, 4 = quite a bit, 5 = very much)
[A][B] Different letters indicate significantly different means for that analytic comparison across schools of varying size.
ns = nonsignificant

Table 5: Means (and Standard Deviations) for Improvement in School Environment, Student Socio-Emotional Adjustment, and Discipline Infractions by Length of Time Using Program

Data suggests that there are both immediate and long-lasting benefits to using the program.

	Less than 6 months (n = 66)	1 year (n = 221)	2 years (n = 218)	3 years (n = 177)	4+ years (n = 217)	
Improvements in School Environment						
• School climate	3.44 A (1.08)	3.66 (.78)	3.87 B (.79)	3.81 B (.81)	3.90 B (.87)	$F(4,894) = 5.79$, $p < .001$
• Morale of teachers	3.27 A (1.10)	3.53 (.82)	3.71 B (.87)	3.58 (.84)	3.62 B (.89)	$F(4,894) = 3.43$, $p < .01$
• More student conversation about character issues	3.21 (1.07)	3.34 (.90)	3.51 (.87)	3.40 (.82)	3.40 (1.01)	$F(4,894) = 1.77$, $p = ns$
Increases in Socio-Emotional Skills						
• Self awareness	2.83 A (1.13)	3.10 A (.82)	3.34 B (.84)	3.39 B (.73)	3.34 B (.85)	$F(4,894) = 7.31$, $p < .001$
• Social awareness	2.89 A (1.15)	3.26 B (.86)	3.53 B (.80)	3.45 B (.88)	3.49 B (.92)	$F(4,894) = 8.60$, $p < .001$
• Self management	2.73 A (1.14)	3.11 B (.85)	3.42 B (.85)	3.30 B (.87)	3.30 B (.85)	$F(4,894) = 9.56$, $p < .001$
• Relationship Skills	2.73 A (1.13)	3.18 A (.96)	3.54 B (.81)	3.44 B (.82)	3.41 B (.91)	$F(4,894) = 13.02$, $p < .001$
• Responsible decision making	2.82 A (1.08)	3.25 B (.88)	3.46 B (.95)	3.44 B (.91)	3.48 B (.92)	$F(4,894) = 8.21$, $p < .001$
Declines in Discipline Problems						
• Teasing/bullying	2.62 A (.97)	2.95 (.90)	3.15 B (.89)	3.10 B (.79)	3.14 B (.93)	$F(4,894) = 5.75$, $p < .001$
• Discipline referrals to office	2.18 A (1.16)	2.66 B (.98)	2.90 B (1.02)	2.85 B (.98)	2.92 B (1.07)	$F(4,894) = 8.45$, $p < .001$

(1 = not at all, 2 = a little, 3 = somewhat, 4 = quite a bit, 5 = very much)
A B Different letters indicate significantly different means for that analytic comparison across length of time using program.
ns = nonsignificant

Table 6: Means (and Standard Deviations) for Improvement in School Environment, Student Socio-Emotional Adjustment, and Discipline Infractions by Number of Days a Week School Uses Program

Schools that use the daily messages more days a week reported greater increases in student social and self awareness and a greater positive impact on the morale of teachers and the general school climate.

	1 day (n = 54)	2 days (n = 32)	3 days (n = 42)	4 days (n = 33)	5 days (n = 752)	
Improvements in School Environment						
• School climate	3.72 (.88)	3.31 A (.97)	3.74 (.66)	3.58 (1.03)	3.81 B (.85)	$F (4,908) = 3.18$, $p < .05$
• Morale of teachers	3.37 (1.01)	3.31 A (.97)	3.26 (.88)	3.61 (.79)	3.63 B (.88)	$F (4,908) = 3.31$, $p < .05$
• More student conversation about character issues	3.28 (.90)	3.22 (.91)	3.33 (.82)	3.36 (.96)	3.42 (.94)	$F (4,908) = .65$, $p = ns$
Increases in Socio-Emotional Skills						
• Self awareness	3.24 (.87)	2.72 A (.92)	3.21 (.65)	3.28 (.84)	3.26 B (.87)	$F (4,908) = 3.06$, $p < .05$
• Social awareness	3.22 (1.08)	2.91 A (1.03)	3.33 (.69)	3.55 B (.75)	3.41 B (.91)	$F (4,908) = 3.11$, $p < .05$
• Self management	3.15 (.96)	2.84 (.81)	3.24 (.73)	3.39 (.90)	3.25 (.91)	$F (4,908) = 1.94$, $p = ns$
• Relationship skills	3.31 (1.01)	3.00 (.91)	3.38 (.62)	3.39 (.90)	3.35 (.95)	$F (4,908) = 1.13$, $p = ns$
• Responsible decision making	3.35 (.85)	2.88 (.91)	3.36 (.76)	3.45 (.87)	3.37 (.97)	$F (4,908) = 2.20$, $p = ns$
Declines in Discipline Problems						
• Teasing/bullying	3.06 (.92)	2.75 (.84)	3.07 (.68)	2.88 (.93)	3.07 (.92)	$F (4,908) = 1.24$, $p = ns$
• Discipline referrals to office	2.69 (1.21)	2.34 (1.09)	2.88 (.89)	2.79 (1.02)	2.81 (1.04)	$F (4,908) = 1.71$, $p = ns$

(1 = not at all, 2 = a little, 3 = somewhat, 4 = quite a bit, 5 = very much)
A B Different letters indicate significantly different means for that analytic comparison across days of week using program.
ns = nonsignificant

Table 7: Means (and Standard Deviations) for Improvement in School Environment, Socio-Emotional Adjustment, and Discipline Infractions by Use of Weekly Journals

Schools that use the journals reported that using Project Wisdom has had a greater impact on student self awareness, social awareness, self management, and relationship skills.

In addition, schools that use journals also reported a greater boost to the school climate and teacher morale, more student conversation about character issues, and a greater decrease in student teasing and/or bullying.

	School uses journal (n = 253)	School does <u>not</u> use journals (n = 592)	
Improvements in School Environment			
• School climate	3.90 (.85)	3.73 (.85)	F (1,843) = 6.85, $p < .01$
• Morale of teachers	3.72 (.88)	3.53 (.88)	F (1,843) = 8.45, $p < .01$
• More student conversation about character issues	3.62 (.90)	3.32 (.93)	F (1,843) = 17.51, $p < .001$
Increases in Socio-Emotional Skills			
• Self awareness	3.36 (.93)	3.19 (.83)	F (1,843) = 7.02, $p < .01$
• Social awareness	3.50 (.95)	3.34 (.89)	F (1,843) = 5.08, $p < .05$
• Self management	3.34 (.94)	3.20 (.88)	F (1,843) = 4.23, $p < .05$
• Relationship skills	3.46 (.97)	3.30 (.92)	F (1,843) = 5.00, $p < .05$
• Responsible decision making	3.46 (1.02)	3.33 (.92)	F (1,843) = 3.44, $p = ns$
Declines in Discipline Problems			
• Teasing/bullying	3.20 (.96)	3.00 (.87)	F (1,843) = 7.75, $p < .01$
• Discipline referrals to office	2.91 (1.07)	2.76 (1.03)	F (1,843) = 3.40, $p = ns$

(1 = not at all, 2 = a little, 3 = somewhat, 4 = quite a bit, 5 = very much)
ns = nonsignificant

Table 8: Means for Improvement in School Environment, Socio-Emotional Adjustment, and Discipline Infractions by Use of Character Education (CE) Teams and Other Character Education Programs (in addition to Project Wisdom)

Schools which have character education teams or committees reported greater positive outcomes.

	School has a CE team (n = 436)	School does not have a CE team (n = 454)		School uses other CE programs (n = 581)	School does not use other CE programs (n = 309)	
Improvements in School Environment						
• School climate	3.87 (.88)	3.69 (.84)	F (1,888) = 9.52, p < .01	3.83 (.85)	3.69 (.88)	F (1,888) = 5.90, p < .05
• Morale of teachers	3.68 (.87)	3.49 (.92)	F (1,888) = 9.30, p < .01	3.64 (.90)	3.47 (.88)	F (1,888) = 7.50, p < .01
• More student conversation about character issues	3.52 (.92)	3.28 (.93)	F (1,888) = 14.40 p < .001	3.49 (.92)	3.24 (.93)	F (1,888) = 13.89, p < .001
Increases in Socio-Emotional Skills						
• Self awareness	3.33 (.89)	3.16 (.84)	F (1,888) = 9.22 p < .01	3.31 (.84)	3.13 (.89)	F (1,888) = 7.84, p < .01
• Social awareness	3.47 (.94)	3.30 (.89)	F (1,888) = 7.55 p < .01	3.45 (.89)	3.30 (.94)	F (1,888) = 5.49, p < .05
• Self management	3.30 (.94)	3.17 (.88)	F (1,888) = 3.87 p < .05	3.29 (.88)	3.15 (.95)	F (1,888) = 4.50 p < .05
• Relationship Skills	3.42 (.98)	3.26 (.89)	F (1,888) = 5.93 p < .01	3.41 (.92)	3.23 (.97)	F (1,888) = 7.57, p < .01
• Responsible decision making	3.44 (.96)	3.28 (.94)	F (1,888) = 5.79 p < .05	3.41 (.93)	3.28 (1.00)	F (1,888) = 3.73, p < .ns
Declines in Discipline Problems						
• Teasing/ bullying	3.12 (.93)	2.97 (.89)	F (1,888) = 6.04 p < .05	3.13 (.89)	2.93 (.92)	F (1,888) = 9.13, p < .05
• Discipline referrals to office	2.95 (1.03)	2.60 (1.06)	F (1,888) = 18.46 p < .0001	2.88 (1.04)	2.63 (1.06)	F (1,888) = 11.72, p < .001

(1 = not at all, 2 = a little, 3 = somewhat, 4 = quite a bit, 5 = very much)
ns = nonsignificant

Table 9: Means for Improvement in School Environment, Socio-Emotional Adjustment, and Discipline Infractions by Policy to Inform Staff and Parents Prior to Implementation

Schools that informed their staffs about Project Wisdom prior to implementation reported greater improvements in student social awareness and relationship skills. They also reported that the daily messages stimulated more student conversation about character issues.

In every case, schools that informed parents about Project Wisdom reported greater benefits to using Project Wisdom as compared to those schools that did not inform parents.

	School informed staff (n = 643)	School did not inform staff (n = 229)		School informed parents (n = 570)	School did not inform parents (n = 299)	
Improvements in School Environment						
• School climate	3.81 (.86)	3.70 (.83)	$F(1,870) = 3.12$, $p = ns$	3.86 (.85)	3.63 (.88)	$F(1,867) = 14.67$, $p < .001$
• Morale of teachers	3.62 (.89)	3.54 (.89)	$F(1,870) = 1.18$, $p = ns$	3.70 (.84)	3.39 (.85)	$F(1,867) = 23.28$, $p < .001$
• More student conversation about character issues	3.45 (.94)	3.28 (.90)	$F(1,870) = 6.54$, $p < .05$	3.52 (.92)	3.18 (.92)	$F(1,867) = 27.67$, $p < .001$
Increases in Socio-Emotional Skills						
• Self awareness	3.27 (.89)	3.17 (.78)	$F(1,870) = 2.29$ $p = ns$	3.35 (.87)	3.05 (.83)	$F(1,867) = 23.53$, $p < .001$
• Social awareness	3.44 (.90)	2.92 (.90)	$F(1,870) = 4.51$, $p < .05$	3.53 (.90)	3.14 (.91)	$F(1,867) = 37.28$, $p < .001$
• Self management	3.27 (.91)	3.15 (.88)	$F(1,870) = 2.96$, $p = ns$	3.36 (.89)	3.00 (.89)	$F(1,867) = 31.72$, $p < .001$
• Relationship skills	3.39 (.93)	3.24 (.93)	$F(1,870) = 4.46$, $p < .05$	3.48 (.88)	3.10 (.99)	$F(1,867) = 33.63$, $p < .001$
• Responsible decision making	3.40 (.95)	3.29 (.94)	$F(1,870) = 2.15$, $p = ns$	3.49 (.93)	3.12 (.94)	$F(1,867) = 29.25$, $p < .001$
Declines in Discipline Problems						
• Teasing/bullying	3.08 (.92)	2.99 (.88)	$F(1,870) = 1.60$, $p = ns$	3.21 (.87)	2.78 (.90)	$F(1,867) = 45.07$, $p < .001$
• Discipline referrals to office	2.82 (1.05)	2.78 (1.00)	$F(1,870) = .36$, $p = ns$	2.96 (1.01)	2.52 (1.04)	$F(1,867) = 35.42$, $p < .001$

(1 = not at all, 2 = a little, 3 = somewhat, 4 = quite a bit, 5 = very much)
ns = nonsignificant

Table 10: Means for Improvement in Socio-Emotional Adjustment and Discipline Infractions by Use of Guest Narrators

Schools that use community guest narrators report seeing greater improvements in students' self awareness, social awareness, self management, and relationship skills.

	School uses guest narrators (n = 188)	School does not use guest narrators (n = 725)	
Improvements in School Environment			
• School climate	3.89 (.93)	3.75 (.84)	$F(1,911) = 4.00$, $p < .05$
• Morale of teachers	3.70 (.92)	3.55 (.89)	$F(1,911) = 3.84$, $p = ns$
• More student conversation about character issues	3.45 (1.02)	3.38 (.91)	$F(1,911) = .72$, $p = ns$
Increases in Socio-Emotional Skills			
• Self awareness	3.36 (.98)	3.21 (.83)	$F(1,911) = 4.69$, $p < .05$
• Social awareness	3.53 (1.03)	3.35 (.88)	$F(1,911) = 5.63$, $p < .05$
• Self management	3.45 (1.02)	3.18 (.86)	$F(1,911) = 12.40$, $p < .001$
• Relationship skills	3.50 (1.06)	3.30 (.90)	$F(1,911) = 6.61$, $p < .05$
• Responsible decision making	3.47 (1.08)	3.33 (.92)	$F(1,911) = 2.98$, $p = ns$
Declines in Discipline Problems			
• Teasing/bullying	3.20 (1.00)	3.01 (.88)	$F(1,911) = 5.37$, $p < .05$
• Discipline referrals to office	3.00 (1.06)	2.74 (1.04)	$F(1,911) = 7.12$, $p < .001$

(1 = not at all, 2 = a little, 3 = somewhat, 4 = quite a bit, 5 = very much)
ns = nonsignificant

Appendix A: About Dr. Beth Manke

Dr. Beth Manke received her Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Studies (with a minor in statistics) in 1995 from Pennsylvania State University and is currently an associate professor in the Department of Human Development at California State University, Long Beach. Dr. Manke has over 12 years of program evaluation experience and is presently coordinating the evaluation efforts for several Houston and Los Angeles organizations. Dr. Manke has expertise in Web-based surveys, paper-and-pencil questionnaires, clinical interviews, and observational techniques. Dr. Manke has described her evaluation findings in written professional reports and community-wide presentations. Her results have also been featured in several newspaper articles and news programs.

In addition to conducting evaluation studies, Dr. Manke maintains an active research program focused on the interplay of children's familial relationships (parent-child and sibling), broader contextual factors, and developmental outcomes, including mental health, academic achievement, and behavior problems. Dr. Manke has co-authored over 20 empirical articles and chapters in scholarly journals and has edited books. She has also presented her research findings in over 30 conference presentations and has been the invited guest speaker at several universities, including the Institute of Child Development in Minneapolis, MN; Oxford University; George Washington University; and the University of Oregon. Dr. Manke has received international recognition for her work. For example, she was an invited research fellow at the Institute of Psychiatry in London England; served as the guest presenter at a methodology workshop at the University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands; and was the recipient of the 1999 International Visiting Scholarship awarded by the University of Surrey, Guildford, UK.

Dr. Manke is a current member of the American Psychological Association, the National Council on Family Relations, International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development, and the Society for Research in Child Development. Dr. Manke currently serves as an ad hoc reviewer for several scholarly journals, including *Developmental Psychology, Journal of Marriage and Family, Social Development, Merill Palmer Quarterly, Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, Family Communication,* and the *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*. Dr. Manke is also on the editorial board of the *Journal of Marriage and Family* and has served as a reviewer for major publishing companies such as McGraw-Hill.

As a faculty member, Dr. Manke has taught courses on child and adolescent development, research methods and design, community service learning, and program evaluation. Dr. Manke was awarded the 2000 College of Social Sciences Teaching Excellence Award at the University of Houston, Houston, TX, and the 2004 Enhancing Educational Effectiveness Award from California State University, Long Beach.

Examples of Publications:

Manke, B., Pike, A. (2003). Combining the social relations model and behavioral genetics to explore the etiology of familial interactions. *Marriage and Family Review*, 33, 179-204.

McGuire, S., Manke, B., Saudino, K.J., Reiss, D., Hetherington, E.M., and Plomin, R. (2000). Perceived competence and self-worth during adolescence: A longitudinal behavioral genetic study. *Child Development*, 70, 1283-1296.

Examples of Conference Presentations:

Manke, B., Corbitt-Shindler, D., Cizik, P., and Powers, L. (2003). *Mentoring programs and children's depression: the role of life events.* Paper presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Tampa, FL, April.

Manke, B., Fried, H., Shiver, J., and Haggard, S. (2000). *Predicting children's well-being: Do neighborhood characteristics matter?* Paper presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research on Adolescence, Chicago, IL, April.

Manke, B. (2000). *Parent education in urban settings: Reaching families at greatest risk.* Invited talk given at the annual conference of the World Future Society, Houston, TX, July.

Appendix B: 2000 Survey

Total number of respondents: 303.

Questions	No opinion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Responses of 7 and above
• The daily messages encourage students to reflect on values being fostered.	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	3%	8%	29%	17%	39%	93%
• The program affects the school climate in a positive way.	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	3%	7%	23%	22%	41%	93%
• Staff and parents are satisfied with the values being presented.	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%	3%	19%	23%	48%	93%
• The program helps foster students' understanding of multiple perspectives.	6%	0%	0%	1%	1%	4%	4%	12%	30%	20%	23%	85%
• Program has helped improve students' behavior.	11%	0%	0%	1%	1%	4%	12%	16%	28%	14%	12%	70%
• Staff members report that they benefit as much as the students.	10%	1%	0%	0%	2%	5%	5%	9%	22%	21%	25%	78%
• The program has helped decrease discipline referrals to the office.	23%	3%	0%	3%	3%	12%	9%	15%	17%	8%	6%	46%
• Students refer to or talk about the daily messages.	6%	0%	1%	3%	3%	7%	9%	15%	21%	19%	17%	71%
• The program helps decrease racial/ethnic incidents and/or bullying.	23%	1%	1%	4%	4%	7%	9%	14%	17%	11%	8%	50%
• The program helps improve students' attitude toward school and learning.	11%	1%	0%	1%	2%	7%	8%	18%	26%	17%	9%	70%
• Teachers report program generates discussion in the classroom.	11%	0%	0%	0%	2%	7%	8%	15%	20%	18%	19%	72%
• Students comment when narrator(s) miss(es) broadcast.	22%	1%	2%	0%	3%	2%	6%	6%	13%	15%	30%	64%

(1 = the lowest rating, 10 = the highest)

Appendix C: 2001 Survey

Total number of respondents: 176.

Questions	No opinion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Responses of 5 and above
• The daily messages encourage students to reflect on values being fostered.	5%	0%	0%	1%	5%	15%	27%	48%	90%
• The program affects the school climate in a positive way.	5%	0%	0%	2%	2%	11%	35%	46%	91%
• Staff and parents are satisfied with the values being presented.	5%	0%	1%	1%	2%	10%	28%	55%	92%
• The program helps foster students' understanding of multiple perspectives.	6%	0%	1%	1%	7%	19%	36%	29%	84%
• Program has helped improve students' behavior.	25%	1%	1%	7%	11%	24%	19%	11%	55%
• Staff members report that they benefit as much as the students.	7%	0%	1%	3%	11%	28%	26%	23%	77%
• The program has helped decrease discipline referrals to the office.	22%	1%	2%	8%	11%	30%	20%	6%	56%
• Students refer to or talk about the daily messages.	8%	0%	2%	3%	5%	28%	31%	23%	82%
• The program helps decrease racial/ethnic incidents and/or bullying.	26%	1%	1%	2%	4%	10%	19%	36%	66%

(1 = the lowest rating, 7 = the highest)

Students are more aware of the feelings of others and when in the office, they often can quote the statement read during the announcements.

Ranay Roth,
Principal,
Perry Middle School,
Perry, OK

Appendix D: 2002 Web-based Survey

Total number of respondents: 420.

Questions	No opinion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Responses of 5 and above
• Messages encourage students to reflect on values being fostered.	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	11%	18%	67%	96%
• The program affects the school climate in a positive way.	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	15%	15%	68%	98%
• Staff and parents are satisfied with the values presented.	1%	0%	0%	1%	2%	6%	14%	76%	96%
• Program fosters an understanding of multiple perspectives.	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	10%	14%	74%	98%
• Program has helped decrease discipline referrals.	14%	3%	3%	3%	16%	27%	9%	25%	61%
• Students refer to or talk about the daily messages.	1%	0%	3%	5%	12%	23%	15%	40%	78%
• Program has helped decrease teasing and/or bullying.	9%	1%	3%	7%	14%	30%	15%	22%	67%
• Teachers report that the program generates discussion.	3%	1%	3%	4%	9%	19%	19%	43%	81%
• Students comment when narrator(s) miss(es) a broadcast.	13%	3%	3%	3%	5%	14%	12%	48%	74%
• Staff understands the concept and rationale of character education.	0%	0%	0%	1%	3%	10%	11%	75%	96%

(1 = the lowest rating, 7 = the highest)

Appendix E: 2003 Web-based Survey

Total number of respondents: 690.

Questions	Percent of respondents who indicated "somewhat," "quite a bit," or "very much"
Impact of Program/Perceived Benefits:	
• The daily messages encourage students to reflect on the values being fostered.	99%
• The program helps foster students' understanding of multiple perspectives.	99%
• The program affects the school climate in a positive way.	98%
• The daily messages stimulate student conversation about character issues.	89%
• Teachers report that the program generates structured discussion in the classroom about character education issues.	80%
• The program helps decrease discipline referrals to the office.	77%
• The program helps decrease student teasing and/or bullying.	77%
General Satisfaction:	
• The teaching staff and parents are satisfied with the values being presented in the daily messages.	99%
• Students are disappointed when the narrator(s) miss(es) a daily broadcast.	80%