

Ohio Partners in Character Education

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

Creating Smart & Good Schools



Character coaches receive intensive training



If you wondered where your Character Coaches were last fall, chances are they were at a training. Unintentionally, the trainings stacked up in the month of October. First, they visited Sentinel Career Center for a seminar on how Sentinel integrates character into every aspect of school life. Presentations by principal Hank Elchert and several of his teachers and a building tour gave everyone

some great ideas that many have begun using already. The first thing everyone saw was this huge banner supporting character at the school entrance. You can tell that Sentinel takes character seriously.

Look for details from the other trainings next month!

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES



Anita Williams, principal at Winton Woods High School, was concerned about students at risk for failing Algebra, so she asked her math teachers for the name of every student in Algebra I who was failing at the end of the

first quarter. She called these thirty-three at-risk students to her office. Students entered apprehensively, wondering why they were being called to the office. They were surprised when, rather than a lecture on the importance of math, Mrs. Williams began by asking them: "What do you think of the high school?" "How was the transition from middle school?" "What kind of help do you need?" Once students understood that the purpose of the meeting was to understand their problems and point of view, they began to relax and speak openly and honestly.

Using
the
4 Keys:



**A COMMUNITY
THAT SUPPORTS
AND CHALLENGES**

They talked about the programs that were helpful and concerns they had with homework, class expectations, etc.

Mrs. Williams then asked students to tell about their problems in Algebra I. She logged into their Progress

Book page and talked with them about their grades and other specific concerns. She explained the consequences of failing Algebra, elaborating on the need to understand the basics of this course in order to move on to higher levels. Mrs. Williams also used her own "story" to help students understand the importance of learning. She told them that she did not like math courses in school. Her love was for English and that is why she became an English teacher. However, in her present job as principal, she has to understand the "math" of her job, using data when making most of the school's decisions from instituting academic programs to determining the number of students who can eat lunch at one time. Math is everywhere, and even though it was not her plan to work with math in her chosen career,

Supports and Challenges (con't from page 1)

without it her career options would have been limited. Mrs. Williams did not stop there; she found help for these students – a volunteer tutor who comes to the school three days per week. Initially, the plan was to arrange for these 33 students to work with the volunteer. Now, the extra help sessions may include any student who needs additional support with a skill. Students ask their teachers if they may go to the tutor, no longer hesitant to request the help. Mrs. Williams continues to check on the students, monitoring their progress. She has noticed that these students now come up and talk to her in the halls, greeting her or just sharing stories. The relationship is much stronger now that they have met and talked about their achievement.

This practice is an excellent example of “a community that supports and challenges.” Mrs. Williams did not admonish the students for poor performance, or lecture them on how they had to do better. She took

a personal interest in them, listened to what they had to say, talked about consequences for failure, and challenged them to do better. But she also provided the resources to help support these students, with tutoring and attention. She made a personal connection with these students, who are the type to go mostly unnoticed in a large high school. Her actions demonstrated that she cared about them and that they learned what they needed to learn to be successful. Not only have the grades for many of these students improved, but also their work ethic and attitudes have begun to change for the better. Students have learned that a part of being a successful student is in the attitude with which the work is completed. Kudos, Mrs. Williams, for challenging and supporting your students!

Her actions demonstrated that she cared about these students and wanted them to succeed

Meet the Coaches: Mimi Gilmer, Winton Woods



Mimi Gilmer cheerfully serves as the Character Education Coach for the Winton Woods City School District in Cincinnati.

Before becoming a character coach, Mimi served as a classroom teacher for seven years and a school administrator for three. Her teaching career began in Atlanta, GA where she received her B.S. in Education from Georgia State University. After returning home to Cincinnati in 1999, she went on to finish her master's degree at Miami University in Oxford.

Mimi strongly believes in the ability of one person to make a difference in the lives of many, and she is thankful for the opportunity to provide support to the classroom teachers who dedicate their lives to helping others. In her spare time, she and her husband enjoy participating in competitive ballroom dancing

Creating the Touchstone

The Winton Woods PELC (Professional-Ethical Learning Community) began the process of creating a touchstone by meeting, researching and discussing ideas to gather input from all school stakeholders- students, parents and staff in the middle and high school. Data from the School Culture Survey given to each of these stakeholder groups was collected, graphed and tallied. Using this information, the PELC teams broke into discussion groups, and after discussing in depth performance and moral character, they produced a first draft of the touchstone. After three drafts, the PELC and ELC teams met and finalized this Touchstone.

We are Warriors!

- ➡ We bring honor to ourselves and our community.
- ➡ We achieve excellence through hard work, responsibility, and care for others.
- ➡ We create an environment of respect and cooperation by treating others the way we want to be treated.
- ➡ We are proud of who we are: culturally rich, self-disciplined, and confident.

We are Warriors!