Creating Caring and Capable Citizens

Highland Park Elementary
Austin, Texas

Jane Knowles, Principal, 1998 - 2006
Sally Hunter, C.L.A.S.S. Chair
Highland Park Elementary

- Grades K – 5th
- 550 Students including transfers
- Neighborhood school in an urban district
- Teachers averaging 14 years experience
- Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills
- Active parent and community involvement
- Tradition of educating the whole child
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Student leadership training and opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Active Minds</td>
<td>Thinking about thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>Strategies for fully using our minds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Opportunities for school and community volunteer service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Calvin and Hobbes

Calvin: Faster! Faster!
Hobbes: The turbo is people!
Hobbes: That's not gravity just kicked in!

Calvin: Every decision has consequences. Which decision reactions?
Hobbes: Well, each decision has consequences. The range of choices we'll face next.

Calvin: Take this fork in the road. For instance, which way should I jump arbitrarily? I choose left.
Hobbes: Now, as a direct result of that decision, we're facing another decision. Should we jump this ledge or slide along the side of it?

Calvin: If we had turned left at the fork, this new choice would never have come up.
Hobbes: Right, and that decision will give us new choices.

Calvin: What if the first decision was a wrong decision? Should we make another decision carefully?
Hobbes: You never know where you'll end up. That's an important lesson we should learn some time.

Calvin: I wish we could talk about these things without the visual aids.

Calvin and Hobbes Copyright 1990 Universal Press Syndicate.
“I am a Highland Park Scottie, I am a partner in my education. I pledge to make decisions that will help me become the best person I can be.”

Caring and Capable Citizens:
Have zero tolerance for bullying
Practice ethical behaviors
Develop strategies to use personal strengths and strengthen personal weaknesses
Accept and support others with different strengths and weaknesses
Family Groups

School Needs:
Reinforce positive school environment

Community Program:
Families of 2\textsuperscript{nd} – 5\textsuperscript{th} grade students
Regular meetings with Family teacher

School and Student Results:
Stronger campus connections
Acceptance of leadership roles
The Mind That’s Mine

Teachers go beyond labels:

- Become keen observers
- Provide Brain Training
- Model self-reflection
- *Demystify* students
- Offer accommodations and interventions
Neurodevelopmental Constructs

Attention
Temporal-Sequential Ordering
Spatial Ordering
Memory
Language
Neuromotor Functions
Social Cognition
Higher Order Cognition
Mind That’s Mine Fair
Strategies for Learning
Student Opportunities for Service
Preparing for the Future

Fame is like a vapor
Popularity an accident
Riches take wings
Those who cheer today, curse tomorrow
One thing only endures
Character

Robert Allen Shivers
Governor of Texas, 1949-1957
Creating Caring and Capable Citizens

Systematically teach and guide students in the practice of ethical behaviors.
Help them understand their own strengths and weaknesses so they develop tolerance for those of others.
Provide opportunities to experience the satisfaction of serving others.

*As always, the obstacle is time*
Creating Caring and Capable Citizens
Jane Knowles and Sally Hunter, Highland Park Elementary

C – Character  Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility
  Caring, and Citizenship
L – Leadership  Student leadership training and opportunities
A – Active Minds  Thinking about thinking and learning
S – Skills  Strategies for fully using our minds
S – Service  Opportunities for school and community service

C.L.A.S.S. Program Components and Sample Activities:
Committee of teachers, parents, and community members maintains program and provides
related information through newsletter and postings on C.L.A.S.S. bulletin board
Integrated emphasis and consistent use of vocabulary describing ethical behavior, zero
tolerance for bullying, and the power of courageous bystanders
Monday Morning Announcements reinforcing ethical behaviors and Weekly Character Raffle
drawn from tickets awarded to students displaying Character Counts! Traits
Leadership training through Student Council, Safety Patrol, and Class Meetings
Volunteer service planned by students and built into each grade level’s curriculum
  Example – Fourth graders adopted Pioneer Farm as part of their study of Texas history
  and economics. They chose to create Thank You cards the Farm sends to volunteers and
donors and hold a Bake Sale to raise money for replacing student costumes.
After-school community service and citizenship opportunities for students and families
  Example – Students created Thanksgiving tray decorations for local Hospice patients
  after hearing from one of the Hospice caregivers. A student whose own grandfather was
  receiving Hospice care suggested this opportunity.
Recognition of student volunteers in school ceremony and on C.L.A.S.S. board/Students have
documented over 1400 hours of community service each of the last three years
Annual Hall of Stars and Veteran’s Day program honoring family veterans
Brain Training including brain structure and function as well as strategies to utilize brain fully
  Example – Exploring the role of the amygdala (represented by “Amy” pictured above)
  which takes over in times of fear, anger, and stress. Though useful for lizards, it
  interferes with student thinking at school.
Discovering individual strengths and weaknesses through The Mind That’s Mine curriculum
  Example – Students test their short-term memory and attention under a variety of
  conditions to realize they can take steps to improve these skills.
Providing additional insight and assistance to students with special needs through Schools
  Attuned training and materials
  All Kinds of Minds Fair in which 5th graders examine and present their own neurodevelopmental
  strengths and weaknesses along with personal learning strategies
Family Groups Meetings of 2nd though 5th graders to build relationships, discuss school
environment, and practice ethical behavior through games and role-plays
  Example – Students formed a living web to illustrate our interdependence on one another
  when working or playing in a group. In another meeting, students explored “The Secret
  Life of Schools” to discover how decisions are made about rules, procedures, etc.

We believe that tolerance and good citizenship begin when students understand their own
strengths and weaknesses and develop strategies to be responsible for their own progress
and behavior. Only then can they consider the needs and welfare of others.
### Organizing Student Observations

Use this form to begin observing a student whom you think is struggling with some aspect of learning. On the left, record three to five concerns and three to five strengths. These can be academic and/or non-academic in nature.

In the right-hand corner, cite supporting evidence for each concern and strength. These should be observable behaviors. Be as specific as you can (e.g., “Stares out the window when I’m giving instructions.”; “Accurately completes math problem sets faster than other students.”). Examples have been included below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONCERNS</th>
<th>SUPPORTING EVIDENCE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Example – Reading</td>
<td>Example – Has trouble recognizing words when reading aloud.</td>
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<th>STRENGTHS</th>
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<td>Example – Gets along well with others</td>
<td>Example - Is sought out by other students as a playmate.</td>
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Adapted from Noticing a Student
Schools Attuned
www.schoolsattuned.org
c 2002 All Kinds of Minds
Student Opportunities for Service
Grade Level/Class Guidelines

1. Grade levels choose a month on the school calendar in which to complete their project(s). Teachers can decide to do one project for the entire grade level or separate projects in each homeroom.

2. Demonstrate to students that each individual is a part of many larger communities - family, class, school, neighborhood, city, state, nation, and world. An illustration can be made with concentric circles that increase in size or with a set of measuring cups that fit inside one another.

3. Help the students brainstorm ways children can show they care or are responsible to each of these communities. Examples might include:
   - Family - Chores
   - School - Follow rules
   - City - Pick up trash
   - World - Don’t waste water or other resources
   - Class - Be a friend
   - Neighborhood - Pick up after dog
   - State/Nation - Get parents to vote

4. Discuss how people can help even more when they work together. Ask them to spend a few days talking with their parents about needs in our community and learning about groups in our area who help solve problems.

5. Help the students compile either a list of problems they would like to work on or a list of community organizations they would like to help. From the list, the class selects either a problem or an organization. Some teachers may choose to create both lists by choosing the problem first and then a community organization that addresses the selected problem.

6. Students brainstorm ideas for helping. Ask student (or parent) volunteers to research the feasibility of each idea by contacting the agency and gathering needed information.

7. After listening to information on each idea, the class chooses a service project. Teachers may have to “guide” students to select reasonable projects. Raising money is fine as long as the students themselves must make the effort to earn contributions.

8. Check with other grade levels before involving their students in your project. The best advertising methods are sending small groups of students to talk to classes or attaching flyers to emails so teachers can choose whether or not to post them. We will not advertise grade level projects in the main hall.

9. Confirm your service project with any involved community organization. Try to give each child a specific responsibility in the class activity.

10. Be sure to take pictures of your students as they work on each step of their project. Have your CLASS Advocate send pictures and information to The West Austin News and other news agencies.

11. Guide students in recording their experiences while planning and carrying out their service project - What was successful? What would they do differently next time? How do they feel about the process and the finished project? Send a brief report to the C.L.A.S.S. Committee when finished.
C.L.A.S.S. Resources

Bullyproof:  A Teacher's Guide on Teasing and Bullying for Use with Fourth and Fifth Grade Students and Quit It! A Teacher's Guide on Teasing and Bullying for Use with Students in Grades K – 3.  Wellesley Centers for Women.
Character Counts!  Josephson Institute of Ethics.  www.charactercounts.org
Estes, Eleanor.  The Hundred Dresses.  In winning a medal she is no longer there to receive, a little Polish girl teaches her classmates a lesson.  Bullying.
Fox, Mem.  Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge.  Wilfrid lives next door to a nursing home and sets out to find Miss Nancy's memory.  Respect and caring.
Houston, Gloria.  My Great-Aunt Arizona.  Life-long joy of learning and exploring.
Lord, Betty Bao.  In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson.  In 1947, a Chinese girl starts to feel at home in Brooklyn when she discovers the Brooklyn Dodgers.  Tolerance.
National Service-Learning Clearinghouse.  Information, resources, and assistance for implementing projects in schools.  www.servicelearning.org
Polacco, Patricia.  Babushka's Doll, Chicken Sunday, Pink and Say, Tikvah Means Hope.  Beautiful picture books, each with a valuable character lesson.
Project Wisdom.  Elementary Series 1 and 2.  Collection of announcement scripts reinforcing positive character traits and decision-making.  www.projectwisdom.com
Simon, Seymour.  The Brain.  Detailed information and great photographs.
Taylor, Mildred D.  Mississippi Bridge and The Gold Cadillac.  Experiences of black families in the South from the children's point of view.  Respect, fairness, responsibility.
Yashima, Taro.  Crow Boy.  Classmates finally understand the value of a shy mountain boy.