

# CharacterPlus®

The federal research grants provide data that show where The CharacterPlus Way is implemented with fidelity, staff morale was higher, staff possessed a strong sense of purpose, and there was a high level of administrative support for both staff and students. Student learning was enhanced with increased numbers of students who scored at proficient or advanced on state assessment tests in both reading and math. Students demonstrated healthier prosocial behavior that led to improved school safety, fewer student behavior office referrals, and greater feelings of belonging and autonomy. In addition, students were more likely to view the school as a community.

That's the bigger picture. The close-up view of one school provides a correlation between school culture and climate and academics that reflects what we found in the federal grant. Craig Elementary School in the Parkway School District began a concerted effort to improve school culture and climate in 2011

The school provided an overview of their character journey in their 2016 Schools of Character application, which can be found in the following excerpt:

In the fall of 2011, we realized our students did not feel connected, staff morale was low, and discipline referrals were high. The culture of our building was negative, and Craig was not a place people desired to work, learn, or grow. Due to weak leadership and poor climate, staff did not feel respected or trusted as educators. They felt overwhelmed with discipline and lack of administrative support and were seeking transfers to other schools. The reputation of our school caused parents to begin enrolling their children in other schools. A core group of teachers decided things needed to change. Our journey toward fostering an environment that is conducive to learning and teaching began with dialogue around character education (CE). Stakeholders came together to have honest conversations about what needed to be changed. Out of these conversations came the foundation of our CE work (our Craig Core Values). With the vision and enthusiasm of new leadership, Craig was able to develop a CE program that focuses on the whole child rather than academics only.

Craig Elementary chose to partner with CharacterPlus and implement The CharacterPlus Way. Data collected throughout the process showed incredible gains in school culture, in-school suspension rates, and academic performance, as reflected below and reported by staff and students in grades 3-5 (chart shows changes between 2011-12 school year to 2015-16).

Staff reporting on students' feelings of belonging	↑88%
Staff reporting on the school as a community	↑86%
Staff reporting on school leadership	↑77%
Staff reporting on the school as a learning community	↑94%
Staff reporting on overall school climate	↑70%
Staff reporting on collaborative classroom practices	↑115%
Students reporting on their sense of belonging	↑22%
Students reporting on their sense of school as a community	↑19%
Students reporting on their sense of safety	↑21%
Students reporting on their behavioral engagement	↑15%
Students reporting on their cognitive engagement	↑10%

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Students' reported feelings in every category showed more modest gains, which is in line with what was reported during the federal grant.

At the same time, the school's ELA scores on the MAP test showed substantial gains as well.

## Reading Communications/Language Arts tests given

Grade or name of test given	2014 - 2015	2013 - 2014	2012 - 2013	2011 - 2012	2010 - 2011
3rd Grade	74.2	63.9	58.8	57.4	46.5
4th Grade	74.3	52.6	59.8	53.4	64.2
5th Grade	64.1	56.4	60.7	61.3	52.1

Over the same period of time, due to changes in school culture and climate as well as implementing new practices and policies focused on repairing relationships and keeping students in their classes as often as possible, the school saw a major reduction in their in-and out-of-school suspension.

## Number of Out-of-School Suspensions (no percentages)

2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
0	0	30	39	82

## Number of In-School Suspensions or Placements (no percentages)

2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
25	12	58	87	39

If you feel any of this information needs additional explanation, feel free to do so below.

With the implementation of our Behavior Intervention Room (2012-2013), data is reported differently for in-school and out of school suspensions.