



# **Report**

**Project Navig8/Core-Life: Lincoln Elementary Pilot**

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**July 2015**

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## Background

In the wake of the complex and ever-changing global and technological environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, our families, schools, and communities need to make careful, informed decisions regarding how to protect our children's development for positive life choices. Currently, many of our young people are growing up without the supports they need to feel valued and to become productive members of society. Therefore, it is important for educational leaders to identify and implement effectively research-based and/or theory informed educational approaches that promote children's social, emotional, and academic growth in the early years of school to ensure lifelong meaningful, successful, and fulfilled relationships and experiences.

*“Character education is just as important to education as reading, math, and science.  
~Maria Montessori*

Today's schools face daunting challenges as they attempt to educate students academically, not only for self-knowledge but also for meeting the accountability requirements of our data-driven educational system, while simultaneously developing the personal and social skills necessary to become successful, caring, and responsible members of society. According to Greenberg et al. (2003), the 21<sup>st</sup> century has generated "...a whole new set of changes for the youth," including "increased economic and social pressures on families, weakening of community institutions that nurture children's social, emotional, and moral development, and easier access by children to media that encourage health damaging behavior" (p. 468). Therefore, the challenge is to determine the best educational content and environment that will enhance learning during school years and ensure meaningful, happy, and successful futures for all our students.

Given this context, many researchers have developed "fragmented initiatives" in an attempt to develop educational approaches that address social and emotional skills, as well as academic skills. In 1994, the Fetzer Institute convened a group of school-based prevention researchers, educators, and child advocates to address the problem. As a result, the term social and emotional learning (SEL) was initiated and suggested as a conceptual framework. With the organization of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), the goal of "establishing high-quality, evidence-based SEL as an essential part of preschool through high school became a reality "(Greenberg et al., 2003, p. 469).

A review of the research literature of the last two decades supports the assertion that schools must design programs that integrate personal, social, and academic skills. Research suggests that a high quality education should generate students who possess self –knowledge; develop "healthy interpersonal relationships"; are "culturally literate"; are "committed to lifelong learning"; are "intellectually reflective"; "interact in socially skilled and respectful ways"; demonstrate positive, safe, and healthy behaviors"; "contribute ethically and responsibly to their peer group, family, school, and community"; "adhere to five shared values: compassion, honesty, fairness, responsibility, and respect"; and "possess basic competencies, work habits, and values as a foundation for meaningful employment and engaged citizenship" (Diekstra, 2008; Osher, Dwyer, & Jackson, 2002; Elias et al., 1997; Greenberg, Zins, and Elias, 2003; Greenberg, Weissberg, O'Brien, Zins, Fredericks, Resnik, & Elias, 2003; Jackson & Davis, 2000; Lantieri 2001; Learning First Alliance, 2001; Loges and Kidder, 1997; Wilson,

Gottfredson, & Najaka, 2001; Weissberg, Kumpfer, & Seligman, 2003; Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004.

Other significant research literature on educating the “whole” child emerged. For example, Lantieri (2001) provided a synthesis of the social and emotional learning movement brought about by Daniel Goleman’s book *Emotional Intelligence* (1995). Lantieri believes that Goleman “paved the way in making educators make the link between one’s emotional intelligence as a basic requirement for the effective use of one’s IQ—or our cognitive skills and knowledge” (p.17). Another theory developed by Howard Gardner (1999) advocated the existence of multiple intelligences and identified specific intelligences as: “personal intelligences,” “naturalist intelligence,” “a spiritual intelligence,” and “an existential intelligence.” Still another notable program addressing the coordination of social, emotional, moral, physical, and cognitive development of young people was “developmental assets” (Search Institute, 1997). Researchers from the Search Institute focused not only on risk factors but also on a strengths-based component. For example, the Search Institute researchers studied 100,000 12<sup>th</sup> graders in 213 towns and cities in the US to identify the “building blocks of healthy development: that assist young people in choosing positive paths, making wise decisions, and growing up to be caring and responsible adults.” As a result of their study, they identified forty positive experiences or qualities, called “developmental assets.” Among those are service to others, religious community, creative activities, caring, integrity, honesty, personal power, sense of purpose, and positive view of personal future.

Unfortunately, Lantieri (2001) concludes that as of the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, our present system of public education does not “consciously and systematically” deal with these critical issues (p. 11). Likewise, Greenberg et al. (2003) state that “the current impact of these programs is limited because of insufficient coordination with other components of school operations and inattention to implementation and evaluation factors necessary for strong program impact and sustainability” (p.466).

Greenberg et al. (2003) identify research supporting a myriad of school-based prevention programs that target positive academic, social, emotional, and health behaviors. (See the complete review to access the research studies.) Some of the studies are environment-focused; some person focused, and some include multiple approaches. The authors conclude “that well-designed, well-implemented school-based prevention and youth development programming can positively influence a diverse array of social, health, and academic outcomes.” Furthermore, they believe that key effective educational strategies include: teaching children to apply social and emotional skills in their daily lives through interactive classroom instruction and school or community service; fostering respectful, supportive relationships among students, school staff, and parents; and supporting and rewarding positive social, health, and academic behavior through systematic school–family–community approaches. Furthermore, they also found that multiyear, multicomponent programs are more likely to produce lasting benefits as compared to short-term interventions.

In 2004, Christopher Peterson and Martin E.P. Seligman initiated discussion on the importance of developing character traits. They identified 25 core virtues that people across cultures accept: optimism, curiosity, perseverance, enthusiasm, social intelligence, self-control, gratitude, honesty, courage, bravery, kindness, appreciation of beauty, humor, and fairness. Ultimately, seven core strengths were identified as “real game changers for academic achievement, success, and happiness” (Tiffany Shlain & The Moxie Institute Films. *The Science of Character*. Sept. 18, 2015. [www.letitripple.org/character](http://www.letitripple.org/character)).

Payton et al. (2008) and Durlak et al. (2011) published additional empirical evidence regarding the positive impact of SEL programs. Findings from the Durlak study revealed that SEL participants demonstrated significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, behavior, and academic performance that showed an 11-percentile-point gain in achievement. This finding is of utmost importance in view of schools’ accountability for improving students’ academic performance. The findings from these studies replicate results from other research teams, such as Wilson et al. (2001) and Diekstra (2008). Although research supports the effectiveness of SEL programming, further research is needed to enhance the quality of future programs. Moreover, the body of literature also indicates that systemic factors are crucial to success (Greenberg et al., 2003). Three significant factors are policy, leadership, and professional development for teachers and administrators (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2005; Kam, Greenberg, & Walls, 2003; Devaney et al., 2006).

Current researchers outline five key competencies of SEL: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor & Schellinger, 2011). And, Edutopia in *Social and Emotional Learning Research Review* (November 7, 2012) provides a chart of some of the most effective research-proven SEL programs available: Roots of Empathy, Positive Action, Responsive Classroom Approach, Second Step, 4 R’s (Reading, Writing, Respect, and Resolution), Resolving Conflict Creatively Program, Meditation, and Service Learning. (See the original chart for the practices, outcomes, and research).

Educational approaches, however, must be presented in a school culture conducive to learning. Dr. Kent D. Peterson, a professor in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, defined school culture as: "School culture is the set of norms, values and beliefs, rituals and ceremonies, symbols and stories that make up the 'persona' of the school." Peterson and Deal stress the importance of collaboration and consensus by all members of the community. They state that a positive school culture is a place with “a shared sense of what is important, a shared ethos of caring and concern, and a shared commitment to helping students learning” (2002, p. 29). More currently, the Glossary of Educational Reform (11-25-2013) defined school culture thusly: “beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, and written and unwritten rules that shape and influence every aspect of how a school functions, but the term also encompasses more concrete issues such as the physical and emotional safety of students, the orderliness of classrooms and public spaces, or the degree to which a school embraces and celebrates racial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural diversity.” <http://edglossary.org/school-culture/>

Given the aforementioned literature and research on the importance of providing a coordinated approach to teaching academic, social, and emotional skills, of developing core virtues and/or

character traits within our students, and of creating a positive school culture conducive to learning, in 2013 a group of educational professionals envisioned a conceptual framework that would address these criteria, specifically a framework with a “developmental assets” foundation. Subsequently, they named the framework “Core-Life” and identified 15 critical character traits that they deemed essential to happy, healthy, and successful lives: respect, responsibility, rules, goals, volunteering, empathy, gratitude, tolerance, healthy living, moderation, honesty, wisdom, optimism, perseverance, and courtesy. Beautifully designed, educationally sound, and community-friendly “teaching aids” were developed for each character trait. The aids were not intended as a “curriculum” but rather as a process of implementation that would serve to enrich the climate and culture of schools and to build the character traits of students. As such, the Core-Life developers sought to involve all members of the educational community in determining the appropriate implementation of the materials in an effort to produce a consistent, coordinated approach with the products. During the 2013-2014 academic year, the materials were used primarily with 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders.

Benson (1997) suggested that children who have more developmental assets may do better at school (Benson, 1997), and defined developmental assets as “important relationships, skills, opportunities and values that help guide adolescents away from risk behaviors, foster resilience, and promote thriving” (Scales et. al, 2006). For example, Scales and colleagues (2006) followed 370 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> graders for three years, and found that students who had more developmental assets in 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade were more likely to have higher GPA grades in 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade (Scales et, al., 2006).

Tableman (2004) in “School Climate and Learning,” a University of Michigan Best Practice Brief, notes that “although the [Search] Institute’s exploration of developmental assets does not discuss school climate *per se*, the external assets it has identified reflect the environment that results in the behavior and values identified in the internal assets. The following external assets, excerpted from the Search Institute’s 40 Developmental Assets<sup>TM</sup>, are descriptive of school climate: Support (other adult relationships, and caring school climate); Empowerment (Community values youth, Youth as resources, and Safety); Boundaries and Expectations (School boundaries, and high expectations).”

With this solid research foundation on character development, social and emotional learning, developmental assets, and school climate/culture, Bonnie Hedrick, Ph.D., developed the Core-Life tools for administrators and teachers to use as they seek to enrich the culture and climate of Northern Kentucky schools. The developer specifically references Developmental Assets theory postulated by researchers at the Search Institute (<http://www.search-institute.org/>), as the backdrop for the character concepts used in *Core-Life*.

## **Program Description**

**Goal and hypotheses:** Informed by the above-mentioned research, Core-Life was developed to improve school climate by introducing and reinforcing positive character traits in students as instructed and reinforced by the teacher/counselor, the parent at home, and the community at large. The developer followed a leading hypothesis that improvement in developmental assets will enrich school climate, reduce maladaptive behaviors, and positively affect academic performance.

The program was offered to Lincoln elementary as a pilot to assess feasibility, and further develop the materials and the content in partnership with teachers, school counselors and school administrators. The Core Life Program, that uses the influence of teachers/counselors, parents, and community reinforcement, builds the following developmental assets:

- Support – The Parent “Fridge Friendly” cards in Core-Life encourages stronger parental/child connections by suggesting activities for dining, playing, and volunteering together. In addition, teachers and other school personnel are encouraged to incorporate activities that build a supportive school climate through such activities as greeting each child at the door when they come each morning, acknowledging good work or good behavior when observed, and other “kernels” of prevention as described by Dr. Dennis Embry (2004). And, the community around the school is encouraged to reinforce the message in the themes being studied, giving coupons and other rewards for parents/students, and providing more family/youth friendly positive activities.
- Empowerment: One of the themes in the Core-Life series is volunteering. Children with their parents are encouraged to “make a difference” in their community (school and surrounding).
- Boundaries and Expectations: One of the themes in the Core-Life series is about rules and boundaries. The parent tips sent home explain the importance of family boundaries. All adults involved in the program are reminded of their important role as a role model. Youth mentors from the high school are encouraged to participate as reading partners and positive role models about the themes of the program.
- Constructive Use of Time: The parent tips (fridge friendly cards) include creative activities and constructive use of time and home and in the community. Literacy is encouraged through the local libraries (they are engaged as a community partner in the Core-Life implementation).
- Commitment to Learning: Reading for pleasure is encouraged through the distribution of donated books to all the families. Parents are being encouraged to engage in parent led teams to enhance their child’s learning environment.
- Positive Values: This is the category of assets that is most closely aligned to the Core-Life program. Caring (empathy), equality and social justice (tolerance), integrity, empathy, responsibility, and restraint (moderation) are all themes of the Core-Life program.
- Social Competencies: Addressed in the Core-Life themes of Setting Goals, Empathy, Respect, Tolerance, and Healthy Living.
- Positive Identity: The Core-Life theme of Optimism addresses this category. Activities are woven into the parent fridge friendly card for the reinforcement of a positive outlook on the future as well as school activities.

## **Implementation**

### **Procedure**

During the pilot phase, 13 core developmental assets were introduced to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students at Lincoln Elementary School in Dayton, KY. Fall semester of 2014 was used to produce the materials, train the teachers, and develop the evaluation plan. Lincoln Elementary implemented Core-Life during the Spring Semester of 2015. The Prevention Alliance furnished the materials for the program, as well as funding for a launch dinner with families, and facilitated book donations for end of year student giveaways.

### **Materials provided**

The Prevention Alliance furnished the following materials/resources (free of charge due to \*funding from Interact for Health and the RC Durr Foundation):

- 100 copies (one per student) of 13 newsletters (four-page activity pamphlet) titled: respect, responsibility, rules, goals volunteering, empathy, gratitude, tolerance healthy living, moderation, honesty, wisdom and optimism. Along with each newsletter, the student received a pencil with the topic and by-line on it. For example, “Respect – you gotta give it to get it.” The student also took home a “fridge-friendly” parent postcard that included on the back ideas about how the concepts could be reinforced in the home.
- 13 lesson plans for the teachers, one for each of the topics.
- 52 posters (4 per topic) for each of the classrooms and the hallways
- T-shirts for each child with the logo imprinted
- Water bottles for end-of-year rewards
- \$500 for parent incentives for active participation

### **Launch Dinner**

Core-Life was launched with a parent night. The event was planned as a community event to introduce the program to the families, and awareness of the program in the community. Parents and reporters were invited by the organizers to a 6 pm dinner in January 2015. The program, which was led by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers, included a video on “The Science of Character” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3nT2KDAGOc>), activities, giveaways were sponsored by the Core-Life grant, and provided at the end of the event.

\*The materials were developed and printed with funds from Interact for Health (9 topics). R.C. Durr funding provided an additional four topics and the parent and child incentives. Incentives included t-shirts, water-bottles, parent gift cards for Kroger, a big prize of a family trip to the Toyland opera, and bottles of detergent and other useful household products.

### **Week-by-Week Classroom Implementation**

Using the provided materials, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers further developed lesson plans for each of the thirteen character traits assessed in the pilot. Class plans included videos and activities consistent with the assets.

During the implementation, students reviewed the topic at the beginning of the week for about 30 minutes. This may have included watching a video, having a discussion and completing an art project or another hands-on activity. Students took an assignment home which would have been completed with parents. During the rest of the week teachers conducted 15 minute activities on the topic of the week. The teachers taught one character concept each week for the next 13 weeks in the following order: respect, responsibility, rules, goals volunteering, empathy, gratitude, tolerance healthy living, moderation, honesty, wisdom and optimism. Even though the school had the option of the counselor or teacher to teach the lessons, teachers insisted on teaching the lessons and integrating the concepts into all curricular content areas.

Counselors were instrumental in wrapping up each week's lesson with additional information. Counselors were also instrumental in helping to track behavioral outcomes and other indicators as requested by the evaluator. For each topic, the teachers had a weekly schedule that included:

- Monday – introductory activity for the topics such as singing the song “Respect” or watching a video
- Tuesday – understanding the definition written on the first page of the newsletter
- Wednesday – finishing the activities in the newsletter and receiving the parent card
- Thursday – was computer day so no activity on the character concept this day
- Friday – the counselors came into each classroom with a supportive activity

### **Core-Life Evaluation**

The main goal of the evaluation was to assess the feasibility of the program and further develop Core-Life content. Secondary goal was to test the null hypotheses of improvement in behavior and academic performance. Therefore, the discussion will include both procedural and statistical outcomes.

### **Data Collection**

Data selection for the evaluation of the pilot phase of the Core-Life intervention program was guided by such recent reports as 2006 Rand Foundation report (Jaycox et al., 2006) that reviewed multiple school interventions and provided guidelines for school based intervention evaluations. According to Jacox, et al. (2006) maladaptive behaviors and academic performance are the appropriate measures of school based intervention success. Following these guidelines, we have selected to collect recorded maladaptive behaviors before and after Core-Life implementation. Therefore, documented maladaptive behaviors from fall and spring semesters were entered by school counselors in to a spreadsheet. Academic achievement was assessed using fall and spring MAP test scores.

### **Parent feedback**

Parent feedback was assessed using follow-up phone interviews. Candidates were selected with the help of the school counselors, and were based on parental participation in the written weekly feedback notes. Phone interviews were used because parents were unable or

unwilling to attend an on-campus focus group. The interviews were conducted by an independent evaluator hired by Dr. Hedrick and payed using Interact for Health grant money.

### **Statistical Analyses**

Descriptive analyses were used to describe the sample and the outcomes. To test hypotheses: Correlational analyses were used to evaluate relationships between program participation, maladaptive behaviors and academic performance. Simple t-test analyses were used to compare before and after academic performance and maladaptive behaviors.

### **Human Subjects Protection**

Because of the small sample size, one location and lack of randomization, all efforts were taken to protect the identity of students. Data was collected by school counselors and provided to the evaluator in a de-individualized form. No demographic information was collected. Parents were interviewed by an outside facilitator to prevent contamination, and teachers did not received feedback of their student's performance to prevent bias.

## **Results**

### **Launch**

The goal of the launch was to generate parent awareness and garner positive publicity. The launch was well attended by 20 families with children, who watched a video and completed activities aligned with Core-Life. The launch program was sponsored by the Alliance using funding from Interact for Health and the Durr foundation. The organizers provided food and giveaways for parents. All three 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers participated in developing and running the 1 hour program, which included a video "The Science of Character" (2014, Shaline & Moxie Institute) developed It was covered by local media (see insert) and picked up by the Associated Press.

# Cincinnati Enquirer Article

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## In Ky., teaching kids optimism, empathy, gratitude

Terry DeMio, tdemio@enquirer.com
12:06 a.m. EST February 8, 2015

**NKY Prevention Alliance kicks off Core Life pilot in area schools.**



(Photo: The Enquirer/Kareem Elgazzar)

DAYTON – It's easy for adults to think kids should be responsible, optimistic, honest, even empathetic. But if kids aren't taught those traits, how can they be expected to use them?

A new program in Northern Kentucky called Core Life is about to address the quandary. A pilot of Core Life starts with third graders at Lincoln Elementary School in Dayton.

"We must shift our thinking from 'Kids should have these skills' to 'We must teach these skills,'" said Dayton Independent Schools Superintendent Jay Brewer.

While different schools will apply Core Life lessons in their own way, the program is expected to be used throughout Northern Kentucky. It was developed by the [Northern Kentucky Prevention Alliance](#) and a marketing team at the Creative Department agency in Over-the-Rhine as a strategy to prevent substance abuse. But it also serves to help kids grow emotionally and socially.

Tuesday evening was the Core Life kickoff at Lincoln Elementary, with parents learning about how their third-graders will get a lesson in a character asset each week for 13 weeks. Parents also were asked to help their kids stay engaged with the program.

The 13 "core" assets that will be taught are: respect, responsibility, rules, goals, volunteering, empathy, gratitude, tolerance, healthy living, moderation, honesty, wisdom and optimism.

TOP VIDEOS



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Newsome: Conflicted feelings about daughter's actions

# Associated Press Article

Weather Alerts
Flash Flood Warning

## Students learning optimism, empathy, gratitude

AP Associated Press

02/16/2015 11:10 AM
02/16/2015 11:11 AM



(MGN Online)

DAYTON, Ky. (AP) — It's easy for adults to think kids should be responsible, optimistic, honest, even empathetic. But if kids aren't taught those traits, how can they be expected to use them?

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The Core Life kickoff happened this month at Lincoln Elementary, with parents learning about how their third-graders will get a lesson in a character asset each week for 13 weeks. Parents also were asked to help their kids stay engaged with the program.

The 13 "core" assets that will be taught are: respect, responsibility, rules, goals, volunteering, empathy, gratitude,

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## Process

The team worked with the teachers during the weeks of implementation to approve videos, and content, collect feedback and further plan evaluation. The evaluator worked closely with the school counselors Ms. Colliver and Ms. Hacker to develop the spread sheet, collect behavior data, and identify parents for follow-up.

## Video

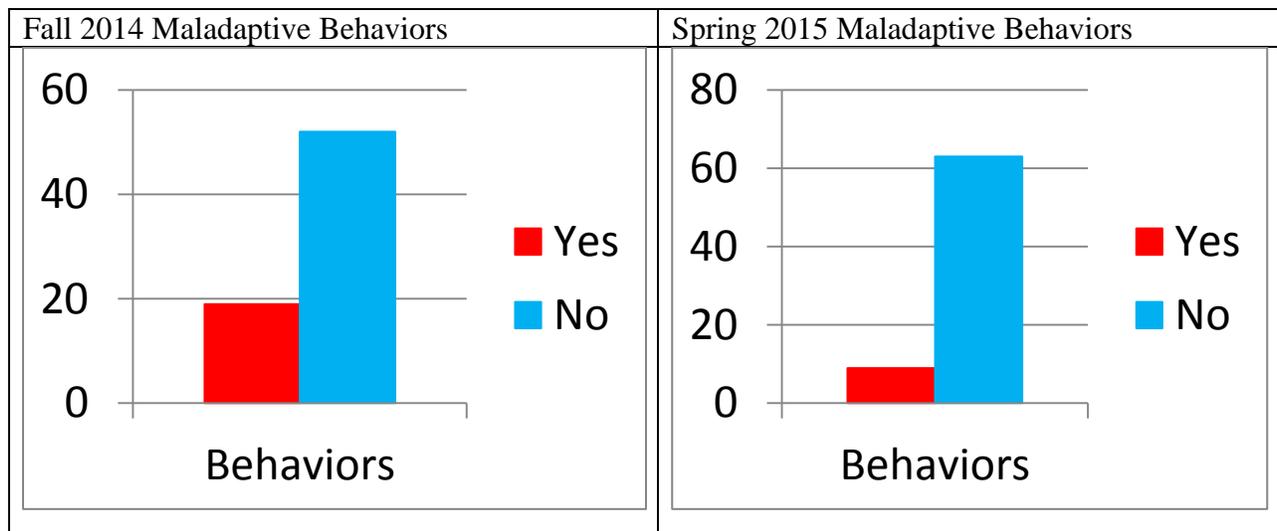
One of the Core-Life in-class sessions was videotaped for quality assurance, and anecdotal feedback was collected from the students

## Attendance

Overall 74 from three 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes completed part or the entire program. Seventy two 3<sup>rd</sup> graders' complete data was used in the analyses (two students with missing data were excluded). There were no significant student differences between classroom teachers. On the average students attended 40.8 days (SD= 2.22) out of 44 possible program days, with 30% of attending 43 days.

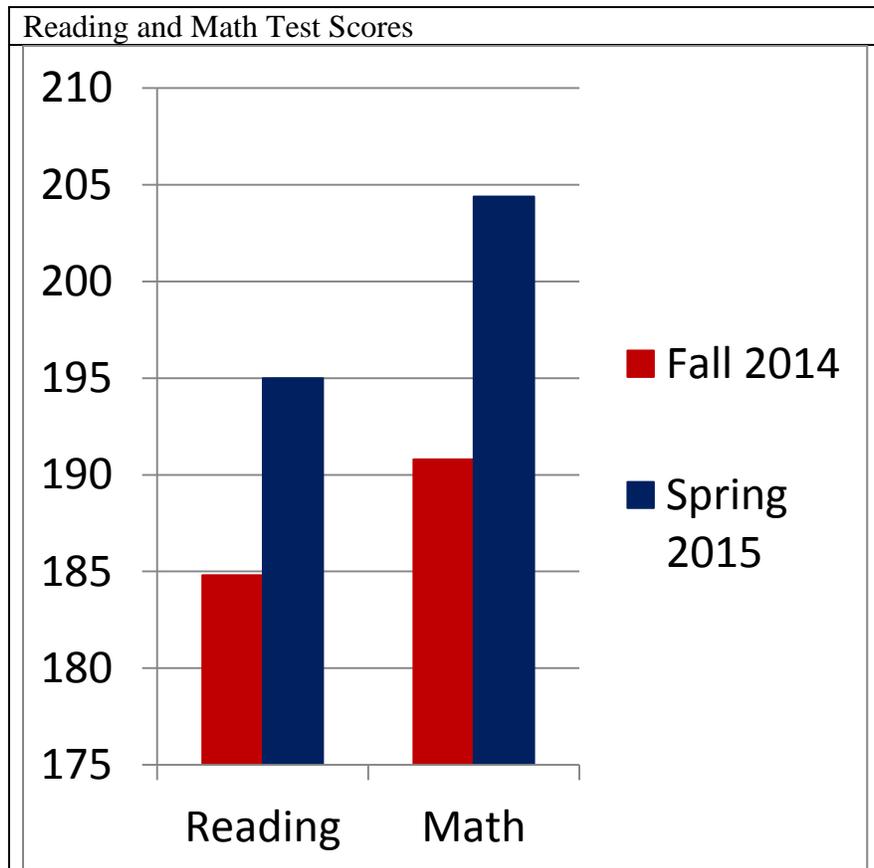
## Problem behaviors

Overall, 19 students had maladaptive behaviors during the fall of 2014 semester, and nine students had maladaptive behaviors in the spring of 2015 semester. Average of maladaptive behaviors dropped from .72 behaviors per student in the fall to .32 behaviors per student in the spring, which was a statistically significant decline ( $t=3.27, p=0.002$ ). To further understand maladaptive behaviors, we conducted a separate set of analysis of students with behaviors. On the average students with behaviors misbehaved 1.2 times in the spring, (ranging from 0 to 7 behaviors) which is a decline from a 2.80 times in the fall (ranging from 1 to 12 behaviors).



### Academic Performance: MAP Test Scores

Overall, all students' scores improved from fall to spring. Reading MAP scores improved by an average of 10 points or 5%, which was statistically significant ( $t=9.94, p<0.01$ ). Math test scores improved by an average of 13.6 points, or 7.12% which was also statistically significant increase ( $t=15.3, p<0.01$ ). For the subsample of students with maladaptive behaviors this increase was even more pronounced. Reading scores increase by an average of 11 points or 6.00%, and math scores increased by 14.5 points, or 7.60%.



### Hypothesis testing: Correlational analyses

While overall, there was no significant relationship between participation in Core-Life, as measured by attendance scores, and MAP test scores for the overall sample. For the overall sample, there was a negative correlation between attendance and maladaptive behaviors that approached statistical significance ( $r=.215, p=.066$ ). The relationship between attendance and maladaptive behaviors was even more pronounced, and statistically significant, when assessed for the subsample of students with maladaptive behaviors ( $r=-.581, p=.009$ ). Also, maladaptive behaviors during fall semester were significantly associated with lower increase in math MAP scores from fall to spring ( $r=-.481, p=0.037$ ). This relationship disappeared with the decline in behaviors in spring of 2015.

## **Analyses Conclusions**

Evaluation of the small sample, non-randomized pilot of Core-Life yielded some positive indicators. Overall, maladaptive behaviors have decreased, and MAP scores increased. Students with maladaptive behaviors seemed to benefit the most, both behaviorally and academically. Anecdotal student reports included comments such as: “I am not bullied as much anymore”; “there’s no more graffiti in the toilets anymore because we respect each other.”

## **Parent Feedback**

Twenty parents were identified by school counselors and the evaluator. Of the 20 phone numbers provided 6 were unreachable. Of the 14 remaining parents, everyone received at least 2 calls, and messages were left. Seven parents completed a short interview and a satisfaction rating scale. Assessing the appropriateness of the nine program topics implemented, parents rated the topics to be appropriate (4.97 on a 1 to 5 scale). Quality of topics was highly rated (4.54/5). And overall, parents reported the desire to see the program continue (4.8/5). Some of the comments included the difficulty in understanding, explaining and implementing the Core-Life concepts at home:

- Trying to show empathy as this was a hard concept
- Some of the words were new concepts
- Not just listening to teachers but also the parents
- Respect
- Sticking to the plan with normal busy life going on
- Goal setting

## **Conclusions**

The Core-Life program was well received by teachers, students and parents at Lincoln elementary school. Some of the obstacles included, measuring and documenting maladaptive behaviors, communication, and coordination of launch and follow-up activities. Core-Life was reported to improve the atmosphere in school, and may have affected the readiness to learn also. Based on data analyses, Core-Life had limited impact on the overall academic performance of students, but may have affected behaviorally challenged students. It is therefore recommended to continue developing Core-Life and expanding its reach.

## **Future Directions**

- Develop better behavior assessment methodology.
- Document and clarify the expectations for participation and funding for schools, and school administrators and staff
- Incorporate parent feedback into parent teacher conference meeting
- Incorporate Lincoln developed materials into the Core-Life Curriculum.
- Develop implementation manual for administrators
- Develop day-to-day implementation for teaching character concepts

- Promote a community block party organized and implemented by local coalition based on the character traits

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