

All-Schools Report Academic Year 2015-2016

An Assessment of Schools Who Are Using the Character Development & Leadership Program

Executive Summary

The mission of the CD&L Program is to foster perceptions, attitudes, and actions necessary to the development of healthy character and leadership in emerging citizens. Feedback from 1,348 male and female socioculturally- and subculturally-diverse high school students demonstrates three vital things:

1. As a group the students valued this program.
2. As a group they demonstrated a decrease in school-disruptive behaviors.
3. Students who had social acumen entering the program didn't change much. *HOWEVER, students who entered the program with problematic character traits and behaviors improved so much that, at the end of their CD&L program, they were very similar to the more socially mature students.*

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All-Schools Report Overview

This All-Schools Report is broken down into three major parts:

Overall Research Findings, Findings for Two Special Applications, & Student Feedback

Overview

The outcomes reported rely on participants' confidential self reports about their attitudes and behaviors (see below) before and after their participation in the CD&L Program. These were anonymous and characterized by candor. Over the years it has been clear that outcome expectations for the CD&L Program should be different depending on each school's reason for using it. For example, students required to participate for remedial reasons may vary among themselves in how much they want to move from undesirable to desirable social behavior and how much they want to use the CD&L Program to do it. However, we expect that their participation in the CD&L Program will result in fewer undesirable behaviors and more prosocial behavior and attitudes. In contrast, senior students enrolled in leadership classes volunteer to be in the CD&L Program, and usually have high prosocial orientations and history. There may be little room for them to improve on the assessment devices. However, the CD&L Program may affirm and strengthen their prosocial tendencies. Ninth-graders who are required to take the CD&L Program to ease their transition into the high school environment probably fall somewhere in the middle of the other two groups of students. They probably vary among themselves in their motivation for the class and — depending on unique socio-cultural context (e.g., family, neighborhood, and peers) — in having room to improve.

In **Part 1** we will first present our findings for the entire group of schools whose students completed the student self report (SSRS-R) before and after their participation in the CD&L Program.

In **Part 2**, because our expectations are sharply different for students in remedial classes and those in elite, leadership classes, we will give the findings specific to those two groups. ***Alternative education and other remedial program administrators and personnel should be very pleased with these results. The elite students stayed the same. But, over the course of the CD&L, the remedial students rose to the level of the model students!***

Finally, in **Part 3** we show how all of the students in academic year 2015 and 2016 evaluated their CD&L experiences.

Part 1: Research Findings for All of the Students Taken Together

Participants

Overall, 3,232 students from 27 educational institutions nationwide participated in the CD&L Program in Academic Year, 2015-2016. Of these, 45% were females; 55% male. Ninety-three percent of the participants were in high school. The other seven percent were in middle school. The participating schools are listed in Appendix 1. The ethnic self-identification of the students is given in Appendix 2.

Not all of the schools that participated in the CD&L program also participated in the “research program”, which obligated them to provide student survey data, not just at the beginning of the program, but also at the end of it. Eight schools completed the survey at the end of their CD&L participation (Appendix 1). Happily 1,348 students from these eight schools provided complete survey data before and after their participation. Women were 44% ($n = 593$) of this sample and men were 56% ($n = 755$). None of them were from the middle schools. This outcomes evaluation sample is nationwide, and comprised only of students in grades 9 through 12. They are socioculturally and socioeconomically diverse. (Appendix 2) There was no discernible pattern in the other students who did not do or did not complete the post survey. Therefore, if and in what way their absences may have changed the findings can not be factored into our conclusions. Nevertheless, because the research group is quite representative of the overall group of CD&L Program participants, our findings from the smaller group can be assumed true of the entire CD&L Program.

Procedures All Schools

Each participating school has the option of purchasing the research package. Their students complete a self-report survey before and after they have completed the CD&L Program. These schools subsequently receive a research report on the progress of their students using 83 target variables (see Hoedel & Lee, 2015, *Empirically-informed character and leadership education in focussed high school classrooms: Consensus, development, evaluation*, in review). It is difficult to determine what school will purchase the research package and for what reasons. However, where we have pre- and post-CD&L Program self-reports by the same students, we can assess how effective the program was for them. And, if their demographic characteristics were the same as those of all the students who participated this academic year, we can extend our pre- and post- findings to all of these students.

The *Student Self Report Survey - Revised* (SSRS-R) was our primary research instrument. It was thoroughly investigated and revised in 2016. The SSRS-R asks the

students 83 questions divided into seven distinct categories. These distinct sections are given in the following table. The first two explore undesirable behaviors expressed in the school setting and in the community at large. The five others are a compilation of prosocial attributes. You should expect that, to the extent that the program was beneficial, your students will report a decrease in undesirable attributes and an increase in desirable ones.

Undesirable Trait Sections	
1. Behavior problems in school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not following school rules • Put on in-school suspension • Suspended from school • Physical fighting in school
2. Lack of character strength in school and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheating on exams • Plagiarism and illicit sharing • Theft • Lying • Bullying • Succumbing to peer pressure
Prosocial Trait Sections	
3. Optimism about mainstream life goals 4. Mainstream pro-social values 5. Social-emotional intelligence 6. Honesty in pursuit of short- and long-term goals 7. Concern with GPA	

Schools that have bought the research package also will receive school-specific information, including:

- **Substance use**
- **Student legal difficulties**
- **Truancy and class cutting**
- **Campus safety (theft bullying, drug sales)**
- **The unabridged and unedited library of their students' written observations about central parts of the CD&L Program.**

Results — All Schools Combined

Expected decline in undesirable traits. The average number of occurrences with regard to each cluster of negative traits for each student is given in the following table. How much faith the reader should place in the before-and-after differences (“Trustworthiness of findings”) has been statistically determined employing t-tests between means for paired samples.

	Number of incidents reported	Before program	After Program	Trustworthiness of change
Behavior Problems in School	• Not following school rules	4.8	4.3	High
	• Put on in-school suspension	4.9	4.8	Not significant
	• Suspended from school	4.9	4.9	Modest
	• Physical fighting in school	4.8	4.7	High
	• Parents given warning	4.9	4.9	Not significant
Behavior Problems in Community	• Cheating on exams	4.6	4.4	High
	• Plagiarism and illicit sharing	4.1	3.8	High
	• Theft	5.0	4.8	High
	• Lying	3.7	3.6	Not significant
	• Bullying	4.8	4.7	High
	• Succumbing to peer pressure	4.6	4.6	Not significant

About once a week (1) About once a month (2) 2 or 3 times last semester (3) 1 time last semester (4) Never (5)

The expected decline in negative behavior occurrences is evident in four out of the five questions. This decline in the incidence of negative behaviors is directly related to CD&L Program course lessons and classroom and campus experiences (experiential learning) stemming from them. The reason that the changes seem small is because of the diversity of the student groups participating. Administrators and their students have different reasons for enrollments and outcome expectations should be tailored to the makeup and motivation of each kind of class. Therefore, after this overall evaluation, the reader will find a comparison of outcomes scores based on the kind of program it was: Remedial, Homeroom, or Elite Leadership

The expected increases in positive - prosocial - values and behavior are shown in the following table.

	Number of incidents reported————>	Before program	After program	Trustworthiness of change
Optimism about mainstream life goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate from high school • Go to college • Job that pays well • Job one enjoys doing • Happy family life • Respected in community • Good, reliable friends • A better life than parents 	<p>4.8</p> <p>4.4</p> <p>4.5</p> <p>4.4</p> <p>4.4</p> <p>4.3</p> <p>4.4</p> <p>4.3</p>	<p>4.7</p> <p>4.4</p> <p>4.4</p> <p>4.4</p> <p>4.3</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p> <p>4.2</p>	<p>Modest</p> <p>Not significant</p> <p>Not significant</p> <p>Not significant</p> <p>Modest</p> <p>Modest</p> <p>Not significant</p> <p>Modest</p>
Demonstrate mainstream social values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive attitude • Preparation • Perseverance • Respect • Honesty • Integrity • Courage • Appreciation • Self control; composure • Empathy • Gratitude • Tolerance • Sacrifice • Loyalty • Responsibility • Compassion • Leadership 	<p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>4.3</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>Not significant</p>
Demonstrate Socio-emotional intelligence (“Emotional IQ”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does extra work • Helps other students • Tries to resolve problems with teachers and classmates • Intervenes to stop bullying • Makes good decisions under stress • Challenges inappropriate behavior by others • Expresses appreciation to parents and mentors • Chooses the “right way” over the “easy way” • Demonstrates positive leadership skills 	<p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>Not significant</p>

	Number of incidents reported————>	Before program	After program	Trustworthi-ness of change
Honesty in pursuit of goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would not lie to get a job • Does not believe in lying or cheating in order to succeed • Affirms self as more in-clined to do right than others • Wants to be trusted • Believes deceit hurts ones character 4.3 4.3 . . .	Not significant

The survey indicates little change. A few students tended to be *slightly less optimistic about their futures*. (Perhaps they were considering their prospects more objectively?) Close inspection of the students' responses in this area indicated that a high degree of participants began at a wholesome level and stayed there. Any outliers got statistically "lost" in the positive climate described by everyone else. Analysis, below, of the different types of students and programs, will help bring some clarity to the above findings.

What can be said overall, looking at the aggregate responses of all participants, is that by the end of their CD&L Program the students have shown *significant decreases in antisocial behaviors and attitudes in their schools and communities*. And, **as a group they began and remain wholesome in the following areas:**

- **Assumption of personal responsibility**
- **Tolerance for others**
- **Perseverance**
- **Respect**
- **Integrity**
- **Appreciation**
- **Self-control**
- **Courage**
- **Leadership**
- **Empathy**
- **Overall positive attitude**

They see each of these attitudinal traits as being *necessary to personal success*. Most critically, *they see themselves as having demonstrated more behaviors exemplifying these changed beliefs in their daily behavior*. Since they began the CD&L Program, **students report more occurrences of going out of their way to help others, doing**

extra work to reach academic goals, working hard to resolve problems with teachers and peers, expressing appreciation to their teachers and parents, and choosing the “right” option as opposed to taking the easy way out. The following chart (“change model”) lays out the future growth of today’s outcomes.

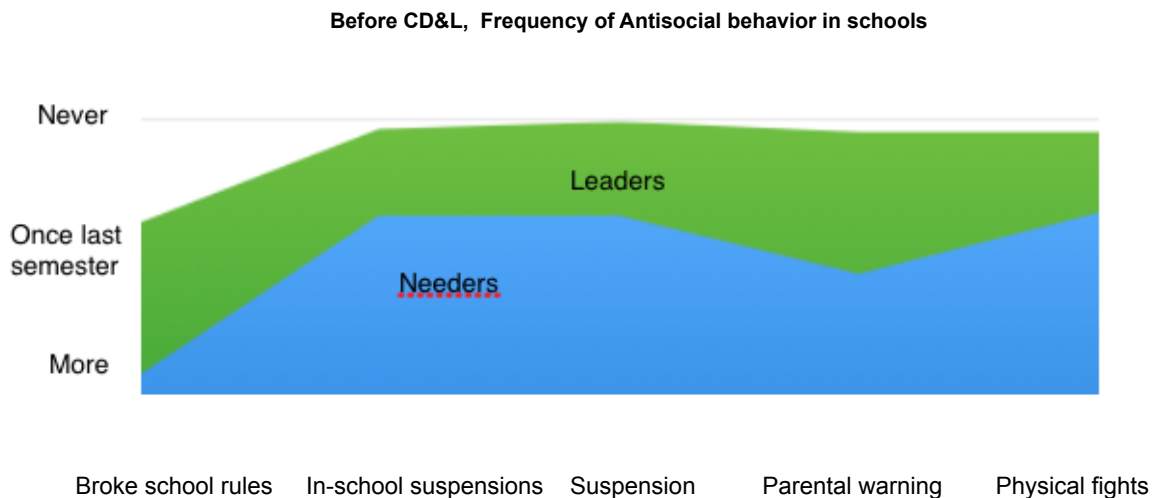
Students’ positive increases with regard to...	Are currently shown in...(Attitude)	Which lead to an immediate outcome (Behavior):	And promote long-term (life-course) outcomes
Personal Responsibility	Understanding options, making choices and accepting consequences	Completing school work, doing extra work, prioritizing one’s day, building stronger relationship	Better grades, more educational options, better care, stronger relationships.
Tolerance	Seeing others as equals and treating them in such a manner	Demonstrate respect for others, less tolerant of bullying and discrimination.	Healthier outlook on life, stronger relationships
Perseverance	Attempting to resolve problems with teachers and peers	Completing homework, trying harder in school, applying for colleges	Satisfaction and self-respect over successes and accomplishments.
Respect	“To gain respect, one must also give respect”	Respecting teachers, classmates and property. Acting in trust-worthy ways.	Stronger relationships and receiving community respect, dignity
Integrity	Doing what is right instead of that which is easy	Making better choices, accepting the consequences of my choices.	Feeling more confident and proud of life choices
Appreciation	“We all benefit from the help of others”	Expressing appreciation to authority figures and mentors	Less destructive entitlement issues and more gratitude

Students' positive increases with regard to...	Are currently shown in...(Attitude)	Which lead to an immediate outcome (Behavior):	And promote long-term (life-course) outcomes
Self-control	"I am in charge of my own emotions and actions"	Control temper, making better decision in stressful situations	Leads a life of less regret and lives a calm and rational life
Courage	"I stand up for my beliefs and stand up to others (e.g., Bullies)"	Confronts bullies, can stand up for own ethical beliefs	A more authentic life, less pretentious, followed own path
Leadership	"I can positively influence others"	Aligns values with behavior, influences others to act with integrity	A life spent creating systemic family and community change.
Empathy	Look out for others, not put-down others	Understands the background and circumstance of other students	A more fulfilling life with less regret, stronger relationships
Positive attitude	Be more positive, attitude is a choice	Nicer, kinder & more positive	Less stressed and more confident in the future

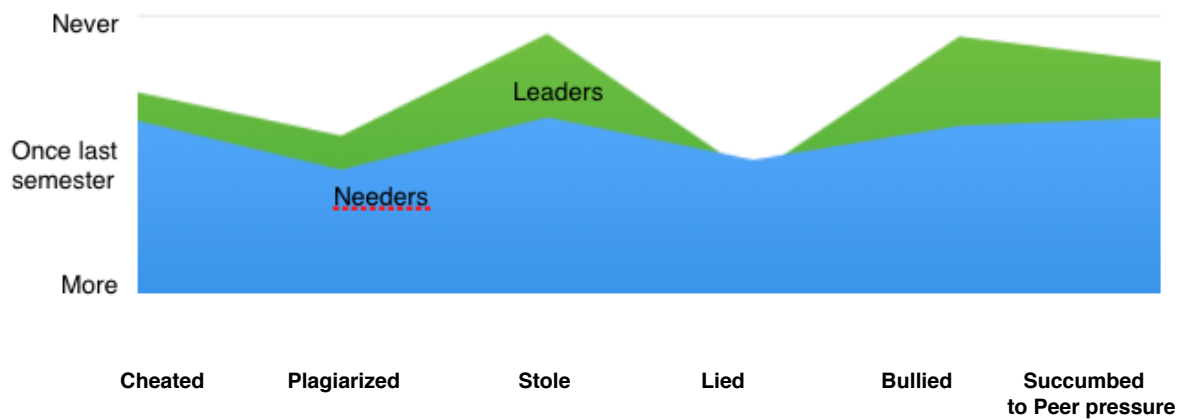
Part 2: Assessing the Students' Progress According to the Programs in which They Were Involved

The above all-schools data hide the remarkable improvements in attitudes and behaviors brought about by mandated CD&L participation for students who had not done well in traditional classrooms and were at high-risk for school dropout (the so-called "Needers"). These "Needers" typically have been candid and, at the start of their CD&L Program, they report a higher frequency of antisocial behavior and attitudes in their schools and communities than do the majority of presumably less-challenged students. However, the Needers' more extreme frequencies of "before" attitudes and behaviors often have been hidden because the all-schools data consist of whole-group aggregate averages. However, close inspection of the data indicates high variability within those averages. **And the outstanding influence of the CD&L program for the Needers has heretofore been hidden.** One way to uncover their progress is to separately compare their before-and-after data with the data supplied by another extreme group, namely, those students who voluntarily enrolled in CD&L programs for school "leaders". By separating out these two groups, one should clearly see what is going on. The Needers' before-CD&L averages are no longer being obscured by the massive numbers of other participants.

In the Beginning.... These predictions were supported by these students. The figures below indicate that, starting out, the "Leaders" reported fewer undesirable character attributes than did the "Needers". These included antisocial behaviors in school (e.g., breaking school rules, earning suspensions) and problems with impulse control (e.g., fighting, cheating, stealing, giving in to peer pressure). Moreover, with regard to prosocial attributes, at the start of their CD&L Programs the Leaders reported more prosocial attitudes and behaviors than did the Needers. Leaders headed every "desirable attribute" category. They, in fact, had little room to improve; unlike the Needers who had lots of room to improve.



Before CD&L, Lack of character strength in school

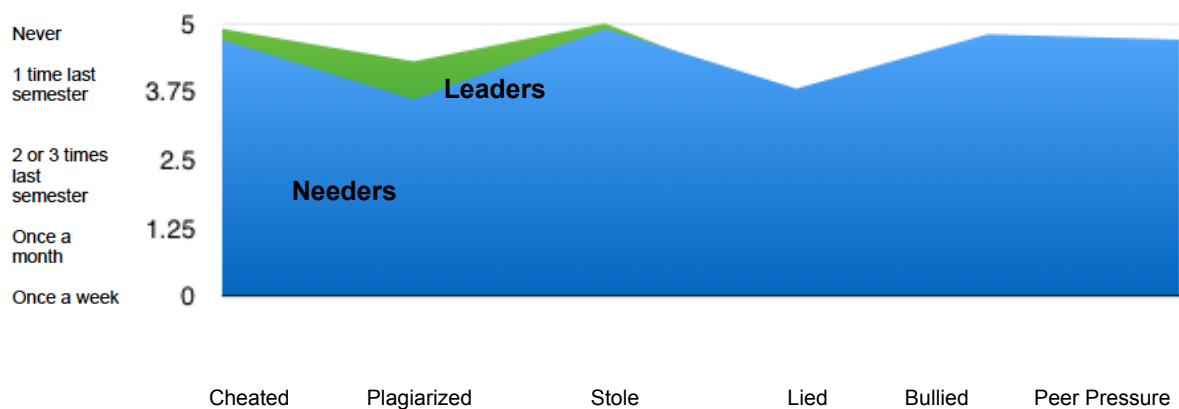


Upon completion of the CD&L Program

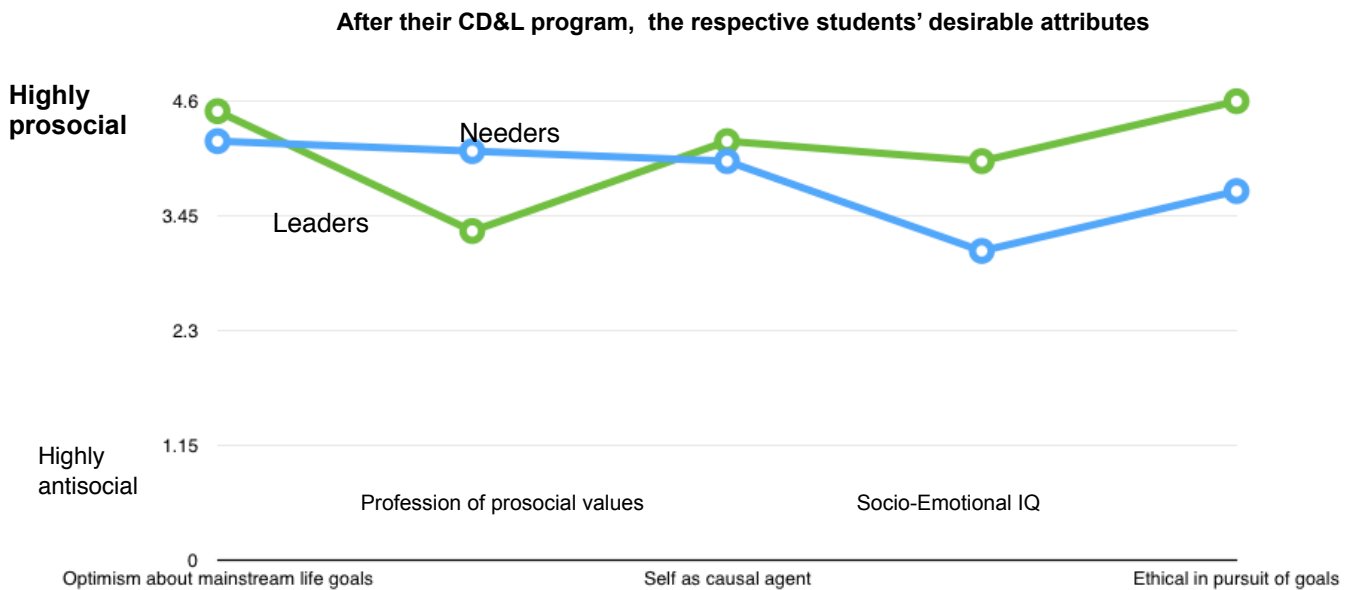
After completion of the CD&L, incidence of antisocial behaviors in school



After CD&L, lack of character strength in school & community



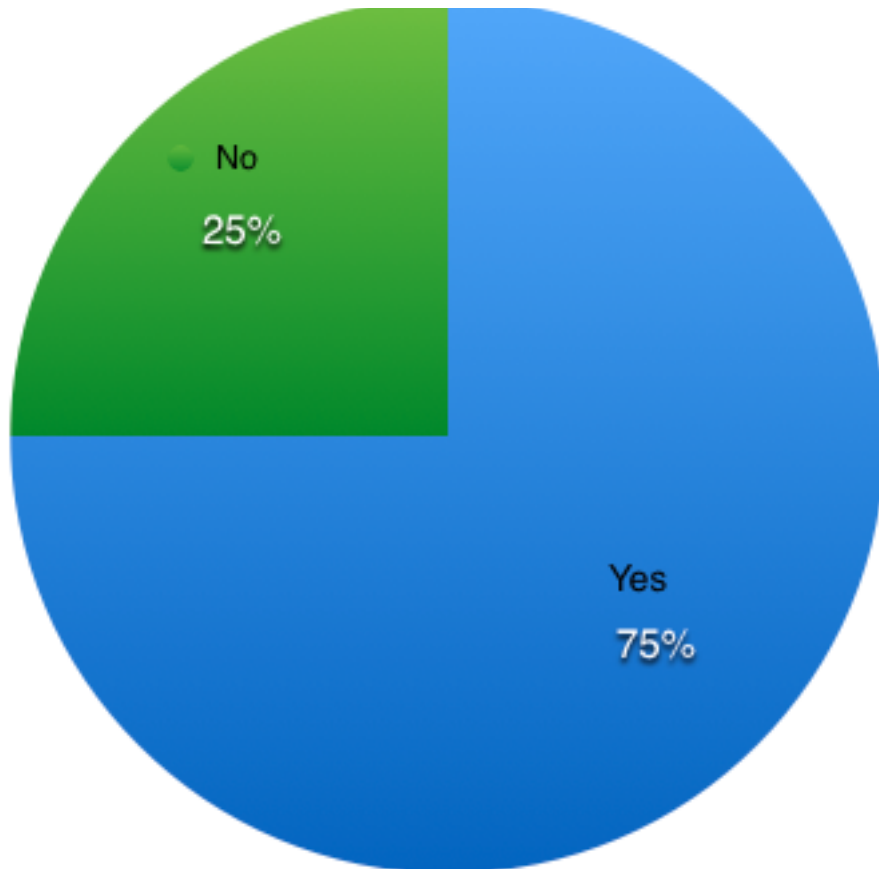
The students from the disparate applications (remedial and elite leadership elite, respectively) began at different points with regard to undesirable attributes in their schools and communities. Elite students, started at a high prosocial level and therefore had little room to improve. Probably their improvement is a manifestation of the CD&L Program affirming and strengthening their prosocial convictions. In contrast, the so-called *Needers* began the CD&L Program with considerable antisocial tendencies and had significant room for improvement. And they did in fact improve to a point that they ended their CD&L Programs on a par with the elite students on most variables and close on others. See the figure below.



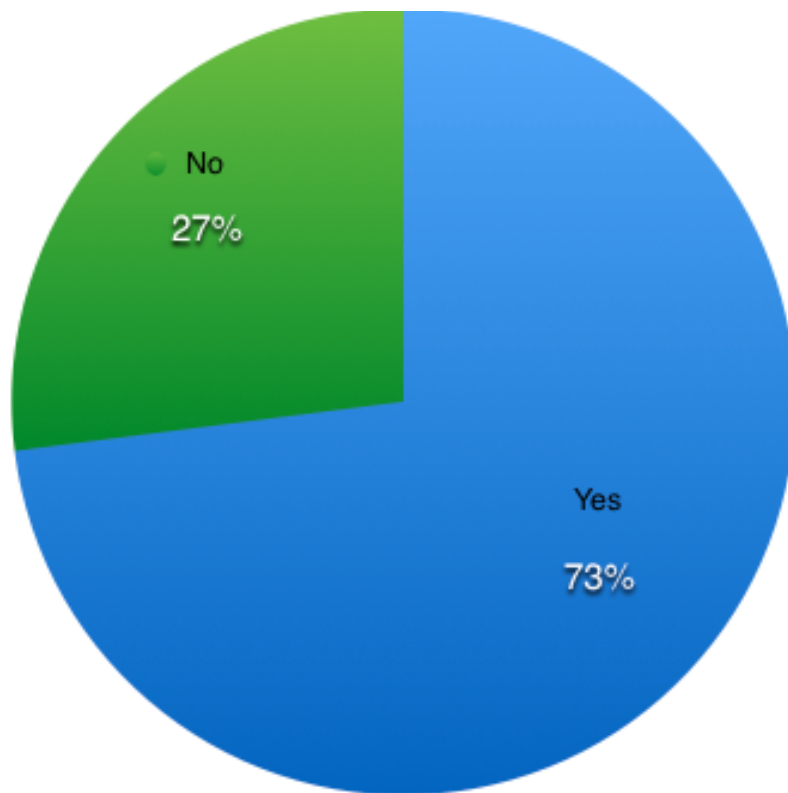
Part 3: How the Students Evaluated Central Parts of the Character Development and Leadership Program

At the end of the post-test; the students were asked to evaluate their experiences with the curriculum. The following numbers are from all 11 schools who submitted post-program surveys.

“Would you recommend this course to a friend?
75% said “Yes”; 25% said “No”



“On a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being high and 1 being low, how do you rate this class?” 73% of the students rated this course positively, that is, gave it a rating of “3” or higher. 55% percent gave the course the highest possible ratings (“4” and “5”). 25% gave the course low ratings (“1” and “2”).

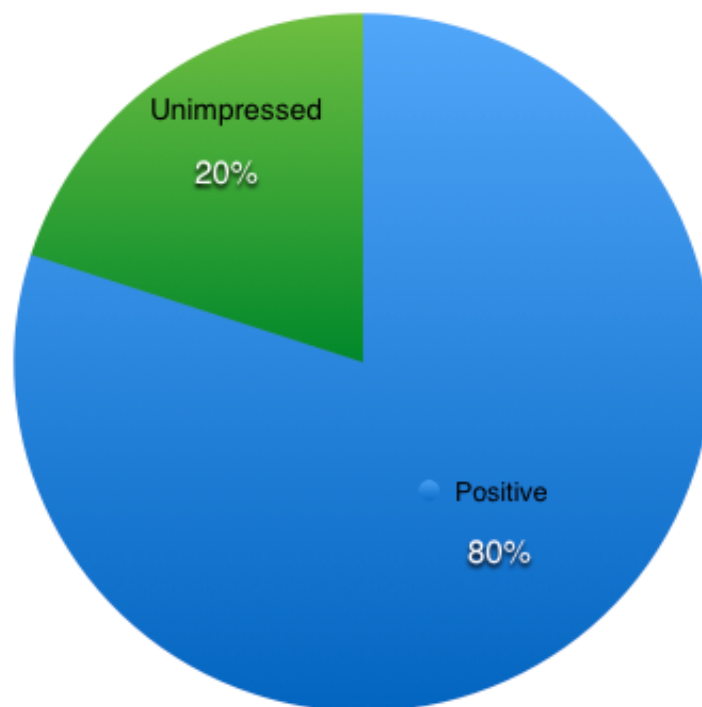


A unexpurgated sampling of the students' rationales

- *doobedoobeedo....*
- *It didn't change me or anything like that but it did make me more aware of some things.*
- *Sometimes it was pointless.*
- *It boosted my confidence which was my intentions in the beginning. Great class.*
- *This class has really helped work on my character and relationships with other people. I think it could do the same for someone else.*

- *This class is great for people who was to expend their leadership skills*
- *I appreciate the teacher and how she ran the class, but if not for the teacher I would not have enjoyed or rated this class as high. I do not agree with the effectiveness of the curriculum, but our teacher was still able to make the class a really interesting learning experience.*
- *It's a good class, fun and informative*
- *Overall I thought it class was pretty good. There was a lot of repetition though.*
- *This class was okay but online module had many flaws and typos. This class is decent but definitely isn't anything special or worth talking about.*
- *It was a class unlike anything I have taken*
- *It's very educational and you can learn a lot from this class.*
- *This class is really cool how different it is from other classes and how laid back it is, compared to other classes in this school.*
- *Class got redundant towards the end, lots of errors on tests.*
- *It was a great learning experience*
- *I was not liking the writing assignments every week.*
- *I learned a lot*
- *I felt this class was very boring and didn't really prepare you for much, just kind of told you traits that you already knew a leader was suppose to have.*
- *I dont believe the teacher was cut out for the position. I liked the class but then again it could have been gone trough much better with a different teacher.*
- *It was a fun class that taught me how to be a better person*
- *It was good*
- *It was alright i just wish opinions could have been talked about more and kids could think of situations.*
- *I love this class! For me it taught me how to get through things. I learned to perservear and have resilience.*
- *i rate this class 4 because its an okay class but all you do is learn about traits and watch movies like they dont actually teach you something valuable in life*
- *Its fun and really reward when you know you are passing this class*
- *On a scale from 1 to 5 I would rate this class a 4 because everything is good except a lot of students.*
- *the teacher helps you with a problem and would stop conflicts with other students.*
- *I chose moderate because the class isn't the most exciting class but it does it's job of teaching.*
- *I say this because even for the good time I have in this class, some of the students take advantage of the quiet and are inappropriate. But, that my only real complaint.*
- *I don't think that this class is even helpful*
- *I dont like school*
- *this class is very interesting and makes you think about yourself. i really don't like the fact that it makes me think about who i am and maybe that will help change me*
- *It is not too good. Not too bad.*
- *This is because the class is very good. It just gives too much homework.*
- *she teaches us really well she explains everything well.*
- *This class is really helpful and in a peaceful place and helps you build your character.*

On a scale from 1 (“Low”) to 5 (“Very positive”), how much influence did this program have on you?” 80% of the participants gave the CD&L Program a positive rating of 3 to 5. 55% give the program the highest ratings possible. 20% of the students were not impressed by the program.



A sampling of student rationales

- *I wasn't a very bad person to start, but this class thought me how to help others and be positive.*
- *The class didn't do a lot to involve us to be better people.*
- *This class taught me never to give up.*
- *because i said so.*
- *Changed me as a person completely and the way that I look at things.*
- *I did not really learn much but I leaned a lot of social skills.*
- *I enjoyed watching movies and doing the work in the class. Made me put what we learned in the class into my every day life and made me think about the future.*

- *I learned so much stuff in this class*
- *I really didn't do anything to should influence*
- *It had me thinking about how i can affect others by my ways. About how i can change my character and do good. It has also helped my on how to control my emotions and what to do at what time.*
- *it hardly had any influence*
- *It has influenced me because i learned more about new things i already knew.*
- *Some if not most had a very positive influence on me.*
- *This class helped me better my character as a person.*
- *We hear stuff like this all the time.*
- *when i was going do something wrong I thought of this class and change my mind.*
- *3 because its stuff they are always telling us so we already know when they say it again.*
- *4 because this class has helped immensely life wise and making smarter decisions.*
- *5 because it teaches me to stay caught up.*
- *a lot*
- *A lot because i'd get help when i need it*
- *A lot it teaches me a lot*
- *A lot of influence*
- *A lot of this maetrial was very basic and stuff I already knew. It was informative maetrial but wasn't really life changing.*
- *A waste of time, I know it's to help me but i didn't enjoy it.*
- *After a week of this class I noticed how my attitude and what decisions I made had changed quite a bit.*
- *Again actvities seemed very boring. They need to be very involving, and fun.*
- *Again i don't think it helped at all with anything*
- *Again, it is common sense.*
- *Again, same with my last answer.*
- *All the skills about disasters and drugs and stuff really helped also learning cpr*
- *All we did was read meanings of the words and play little games. It did not teach much.*
- *Alot*
- *alot because i liked it*
- *alot. i changed so much from last year. and i continue to change and it tells me what i need to work on*
- *Also didn't learn that much*
- *Although i am very lazy when it comes to work, ms lipari stays on me to work*
- *Appreciation was a big unit for me but a lot of the other ones I usually practiced.*
- *As a kid my parents taught me morals and life lessons, however this class helped me remember everything my parents taught me, and reset goals and landmarks in the my life and for my future.*
- *at the begining of school year i was going down the wrong path but then they switched me to his 6th period and my life turned around.*
- *At the beginning of the school year with my first 4th period class it went well and it was fun and educational but then I moved to a new 4th period and it completely changed and not many cared for character.*

“How much do you believe that your character improved as a result of this class?” 66% of the students said that this course changed them considerably; in fact, 34% claimed “High” or “Major” changes in their characters . 16% thought their personal changes were none to slight, and 14% did not respond. Those who claimed little or no personal change indicated that “My character did not need changing.”

“How much do you believe that your leadership abilities improved as a result of this class?” 34% estimated that they made “High” or “Major gains” in leadership ability. 27% claimed “moderate” changes. 17% little to no changes, and 8% claimed that they needed no changes.

“If you could offer one suggestion to improve this class, what would it be?”

An unexpurgated sample of Students' Suggestions

- *I would say do more partner work or group projects you could say. For example after watching a movie on whatever unit we are learning about have a partner and answer and ask questions given by the teacher.*
- *basicaly little bit more home work*
- *For there to be more fun activies.*
- *Have everyone shut up.*
- *I could think, watch more videos about the people who fail and who really try hard to get to the top of success.*
- *I do not know.*
- *i think it would be to give us something that can make us use that character trait more and to get used to it too.*
- *I think that some of the people in the book didn't really have a reason to be in the book like Christopher Reeve.*
- *I think they should make it enthusiastic instead of being slides per slides per slides.*
- *I wouldn't change anything it's good enough.*
- *IDK*
- *Place people near someone who they don't know.*
- *Share more life experiences*
- *to get work done faster*
- *to have more description of the people in the books.*
- *Try more character traits.*
- *A little more practice worksheets.*
- *A new teacher. Or maybe have her more focused on her kids then on her ipad and her damn phone*
- *Actually their wouldn't be anything to improve this class.*
- *add more moviational video it really helps*
- *Allow the teachers more freedom in the curriculum and don't have every week be the exact same pattern. It makes the curriculum dull and boring.*
- *Always do my work and turn it in on time.*
- *Always give your best!*
- *better for PE classes*
- *Better grammer*
- *Better sitting charts*
- *Blogs not necessarily on people*
- *Do more stuff with the community.*
- *Can't think of one.*
- *Certain questions feel as if their are from a completely different subject and it leaves you their trying to think what you should type.*

- *talk also about our personal lives!*
- *Control the class' talking a little*
- *change teachers*
- *Change up the routine a little bit.*
- *Classes outside*
- *Communicate more about what works*

Appendix 1

Schools Participating in CD&L Program 2015-2016

School	
Pre-CD&L Survey	Post-CD&L Survey (Research Participants)
Academy Online High School	
Camerado Springs Middle School	
Cesar Chavez Learning Academy	
Charter Alternative Academy	
Chisholm Ridge Elementary	
Clear Lake High School	
Darrington k-8	
Dodgeland High School	
Elk Rapids High School	
Escalon High School	
Fond du Lac High School	
Gull Lake High School	
Heritage High School	
Hilmar High School	
Hustisford High School	
Innovation High School	
Madera High School	
Marcus High School	
Mary Walker High School	
Merkel High School	
Parry McCluer High School	
Postville High School	
Rockbridge County High School	
Saint Laurence Highschool	
Springdale Middle School	
Waco High School	
Wonewoc Center School	

Appendix 2 Ethnic Identification of Participants

Ethnic Identification	Percent of Students
Native American	2%
Asian	2%
Black	3%
Hispanic or Latino	37%
White	42%
Multi-ethnic	13%