

Taking RESPONSIBILITY

Standards for Ethical and Responsible Behavior in Maine Schools and Communities

The Commission for Ethical and Responsible Student Behavior

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We are immeasurably indebted to the Maine students and their teachers who assisted in the creation of this report.

The Commission thanks Regina Coppens, Ruth Sherman, Mike Higgins, and Bill Primmerman for reviewing drafts of this document. Special thanks also to Elinor Multer for extensive and helpful editing. Photos provided by Jack Mara, MSAD#11.

"Instructors of youth in public or private institutions shall use their best endeavors to impress on the minds of the children and youth committed to their care and instruction the principles of morality and justice and a sacred regard for truth; love of country, humanity and a universal benevolence; the great principles of humanity as illustrated by kindness to birds and animals and regard for all factors which contribute to the well-being of man; industry and frugality; chastity, moderation and temperance; and all other virtues which ornament human society; and to lead those under their care, as their ages and capacities admit, into a particular understanding of the tendency of such virtues to preserve and perfect a republican constitution, secure the blessings of liberty and to promote their future happiness."

Maine Law, 1821, as amended.

[Currently Title 20, Section 1221.]

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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COMMISSIONER

January 16, 2001

With a world more complex and with change more rampant than ever in our history, we are challenged to educate our children for a new future, where promises of prosperity, a civil society, and a thriving democracy are for all of our citizens. We are challenged both to educate our youth to higher levels of knowledge and skills than ever before, and to nurture our young people with the values, attitudes, and behaviors that will enable them to survive and prosper in society. Our schools alone cannot meet these challenges—all of us have a role in shaping this future for our young people and for our State.

Since the beginning of public education in America, our citizens have recognized that the aims of public education extend beyond academics to values, attitudes, and behaviors. Over the last decade, we have reaffirmed this broader purpose for our schools and students here in Maine. And the 119th Maine Legislature underscored this intent by calling for the development of standards for ethical and responsible student behavior.

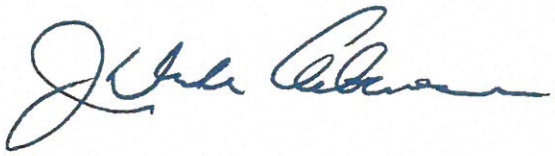
To fulfill this charge from the Legislature, I asked leading educators and citizens of Maine to serve on the Commission for Ethical and Responsible Student Behavior, requesting that they draft statewide standards that would guide school districts across the state. The Commission has succeeded beyond what I had dared hope. In this document, *Taking Responsibility*, the Commission has connected standards for ethical and responsible behavior to Maine's *Common Core of Learning* and the Guiding Principles of Maine's *Learning Results*, landmark documents that articulate the "ends" of learning—what students need to know, and be able to do, and what attitudes they should reflect.

Significantly, this report identifies core principles and best practices for schools and communities to use in creating, practicing, enforcing, and assessing expectations for all students, enabling them to develop as ethical, responsible, and involved citizens. Further, this report defines the attributes of a healthy and sustainable process for schools and communities as they work collaboratively to develop their own core values and codes of conduct.

In undertaking this important work, the Commission listened to many voices, including those of students, welcoming them as integral participants. The highest compliment that can be paid to the Commission is that its work manifests the values in this document: respectful; honest; compassionate; fair; responsible; and courageous. This talented and dedicated group of Maine citizens modeled the very core values and attitudes that we seek in our young people.

I endorse wholeheartedly and adopt enthusiastically this report and the standards identified by the Commission. Now, communities across the state should work in earnest to mobilize their educators, school staff, students, parents, and citizens to adapt and implement these standards. The culture and climate of schools can begin to change immediately, if all involved make this commitment. Most importantly, this document is not for schools and educators alone. Community members and parents must actively engage in understanding and applying the guidance this report provides. Many communities have already begun, and we hope this document will energize and illuminate their efforts. To assist this work, the Department, working with other programs across the state, has established the Maine Character Education Partnership to provide information, grant resources, training, and technical assistance.

I commend the Commission for this powerful and compelling work, and I particularly thank the co-chairs, Rush Kidder and Jill Kaechele, for their skill and perseverance in shepherding this project, allowing the many voices and diverse contributions of the Commission to speak as one. This work will spark crucial conversations and action statewide and locally about how we nurture our youth so that all Maine students have the opportunity and guidance to be good students, good people, and active citizens.



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Standards for Ethical and Responsible Behavior

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For additional resources and information about this report, and about activities and grants focused on character education, visit: www.state.me.us/education/cep/homepage.htm

To order additional copies of this document, or an easy-to-use Executive Summary, please contact the Maine Department of Education at 624-6600, or email us at the above listed website.

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Maine Department of Education
February 2001

CHAPTER ONE

A CALL TO ACTION

MAINE'S STUDENT VOICES

"It was quite surprising how even the younger grade school kids were facing torment. . . . The responsible student seems to be the one getting tormented because he/she is smart or doesn't misbehave. This doesn't seem fair to anyone."

Student interviewer, reflecting on her interview with a fifth grade student

"[Honesty is] being truthful with yourself, your family, friends and your society, also to be free from lying."

Sixth grade student

"Respect is to honor or approve of others whether you like them or not."

Sixth grade student

"They [teachers] send you to the office for really no reason at all, I think. They might have a perfectly good reason, but you don't understand their reason. . . ."

Sixth grade student

"Children more times than not will do what they are shown and not what they are told."

16 year-old girl

"My entire life I have been surrounded by older people, my parents included, who say one thing and do another. Many kids of my generation have had even less guidance than me. Parents aren't doing their jobs, so schools should step in."

17 year-old girl

"All [the students I interviewed] felt well respected by peers, most not by teachers. Those who felt less respect from teachers seemed to be in lower phase classes."

Student interviewer

"My generation and generations in the future need more role models. I think that if we had them we would not have half the problems we have."

Student interviewer

"We must tell the positive stories, not just the negative ones. The problem is in society overall; so kids look for 'purpose' even in negative ways, like in a group of students getting together to watch a fight between two students."

from May 22, 2000 student forum

"I think the only large issue that could be easily changed would be in the teacher/student relationship. At the higher levels [tracks] you often hear about teachers doing a good job listening to students. But at the lower levels that respect is lacking [and] I think that will compound any disrespect students have for each other by an authority figure showing that it is okay to behave in such a way. It is also more likely to cause students to be less respectful to the teacher."

High school sophomore

"If there were to be more diversity in the school system there would be less tension. Kids that are openly homosexual do get harassed. If there were more education about this issue, maybe there would not be so many problems with teasing and/or fights."

18 year- old Out Right member

"Some people stereotype me, especially teachers, that's just how they are. Most prejudice comes from teachers, but racism is present all around. I am afraid to express my opinion to authority figures."

High school freshman

"Families are so busy nowadays that they don't have much time to talk. I think that it is important for families to do things together, whether they watch TV or eat supper together. I would like to see more family values return to American culture."

High school sophomore

"Your mom and dad usually work to support your family, so you have four or five hours off to do whatever you want to do [when you are suspended].

Sixth grade student

"I feel sad for those without a strong family. I think little family mentorship leads to later social troubles."

High school senior

"This may sound harsh, but [as a teenager] you try to make yourself appear how you're supposed to be seen. It's like you're always two people because you're someone else inside."

16 year- old girl

"Too much competition destroys; it's about being better than others."

from May 22, 2000 student forum

"People are influenced greatly by what they're supposed to be."

High school senior

Listen to student voices. Their message is clear. From these young people involved in the Commission's Student Interviewing Project, we learn:

- Even the youngest students have an understanding of what it means to be respectful, responsible, and honest. Even young children are faced with ethical dilemmas.
- While the focus of policy makers, school administrators, and society is often on problematic student behavior, the students' pointed comments should give all adults the incentive to reflect on their own actions or failures to act.
- Students view themselves as integral to the solution(s) to contemporary challenges confronting our schools.
- Students are concerned about the issue of respect, or lack thereof, for diversity. Students identified as issues of concern, sexism, racism, homophobia, and class discrimination.
- Students recognize, and are sad about, the changing structure of family.

The Student Interviewing Project involved a group of 37 middle and high school students who conducted 65 interviews of people of all ages throughout the State of Maine to inform the work of the Commission for Ethical and Responsible Student Behavior.

The anecdotal insights provided by the students who participated in the Student Interviewing Project are echoed by a large number of their peers throughout the state. The responses to a recently conducted survey of 40,000 Maine students statewide, in grades six through twelve, clearly indicate that Maine students would benefit from comprehensive and integrated efforts at fostering ethical and responsible behavior. When students were given the opportunity to "voice their perceptions of several factors contributing to the total learning environment," the *Students Speak* survey found:

- 47% of students claim to have been threatened either verbally or physically at school.
- 31% of students disagree with the statement, "I am proud of my school."
- 25% of students believe teachers do not care about their problems or feelings.
- 46% of students disagree with the statement, "Students show respect for each other."
- 20% of students disagree with the statement, "I feel safe at school."
- Nearly 50% of students claim that other students say insulting or hurtful things to them.
- 40% of students disagree with the statement, "School rules are enforced fairly."
- 20% of students do not believe that teachers respect their thoughts or value their opinions.
- 45% of students disagree with the statement, "Students show respect for teachers."
- 35% of students claim to have difficulty learning due to the disruptive behavior of other students.

-University of Maine College of Education and Human Development (2000).

Maine students in the elementary grades report that they are frequently teased and bullied. About 40% of Maine third-graders say that they had been called hurtful names at least monthly or more frequently. A similar number report being hit, kicked or pushed at least monthly. (Maine Project Against Bullying). For some students, harassment worsens as they get older. For example, gay, lesbian and bisexual youths experience pervasive victimization both verbally and physically. (Maine Children's Alliance: 24).

The student voices are compelling. They point to a need for transformation in our schools. And these voices are not alone; the voices of Maine teachers, parents and other citizens also call for a more explicit reflection of the community's core values in the daily operation of our schools. Student voices and action are critical to achieving the sort of change called for in this report. As we describe in the following chapters, long term systemic change will require collaborative effort from all who matter in the lives of students and the culture of schools. Not one person in our society can afford to overlook this opportunity to ensure that each school and student operates

within a culture that promotes, even demands, ethical and responsible behavior. We all have a role to play in seeking solutions to the problems illustrated by the preceding data.

Maine Values

Maine is a unique and vital community. Underpinning this community has always been a profound sense of values. Civility, common-sense, frugality, generosity, humility, responsibility, independence, integrity—these and other values are so important to our basic character that, though they have defined us in the eyes of the world, we scarcely ever remark upon them. In Maine, a handshake can still seal a deal. We have felt secure in our distinctive Maine community when other communities have seemed beset by the untrustworthy, the chaotic, and the unsafe.

Our values have made Maine a truly special place to live and raise a family. We take comfort in knowing Maine is one of the safest states in the country. Above all, we value our children. In 1999, Maine was named the best state in which to raise a child and was recognized as the top educational system in America.

Although Maine is still one of the safest places in America, teachers and students in our schools are telling us in increasing numbers that irresponsible, disrespectful or violent behavior threatens their sense of personal safety or undermines their ability to teach and to learn. National trends that we have, until recently, watched from a distance are now here in Maine: youth violence and vandalism, bomb threats, studies indicating that many young people don't view cheating as wrong, lack of respect for authority, bullying, an increase in hate crimes and bigotry, use of foul language, and self-destructive behaviors such as substance abuse and suicide.

Some of our youth are making bad decisions. They either lack basic values or fail to apply them. Although these negative behaviors are the exceptions, even a few such bad decisions severely disrupt our schools. In the face of such challenges, too often we grapple with how to punish misbehavior, while ignoring the issue of how to prevent it.

One-third of surveyed Maine residents believe the biggest problem facing today's teenagers is declining moral and/or social values–double the number identifying any other problem.

Nearly 40% of surveyed Maine residents believe the most important issue in education today is teaching children values and discipline–double the number naming any other issue.

Over 60% of surveyed Maine residents believe that public schools should play a very important or critical role in teaching children ethical and responsible behavior.

-Strategic Marketing Services (1999)

Our schools must prepare students for academic and professional success, but they also must prepare students for life. Graduating students must be able to live constructively in society, to deal with frustrations and challenges, to communicate, to coexist, to care, and to make tough decisions about what is right or wrong. Few would agree that our schools have succeeded if they produce students with academic knowledge but without the ability or the will to be responsible and ethical adults.

The need for action grows more urgent as the consequences of unethical behavior become more immediate, far-reaching, and devastating. Today, we witness irresponsible or unethical actions on a grand scale, from nuclear accidents to computer viruses to environmental degradation to deadly violence in our schools. Today, more powerful and personalized technology can yield greater devastation from a single unethical act.

All this lends urgency to our efforts to help both youth and adults in our schools achieve high expectations for responsible behavior and attitudes. Although we cannot control the influences of the media and our broader culture, when our schools and communities actively commit to address the lack of values and decision-making skills that underlies bad behavior, it works. Schools can increase achievement and attendance, improve attitudes and motivation, and reduce disciplinary referrals, suspensions, and disruptive behavior, and can produce citizens who are better equipped to resolve the tough ethical choices that life will present.

The challenge we address has many causes but only one path to a solution. All of us—students, educators, parents, and communities—must take responsibility in order to make change. Our schools are on the front lines, but they cannot do it alone. Only in partnership with parents and community—and, most importantly, with the students themselves—can our schools meet the challenge.

Some may ask, "Whose values will we teach?" The answer, we believe, is simple: "Maine's." Our personal values may be deeply rooted in our unique experiences, but we share a common core. For our communities, for the larger Maine community, and indeed for practically every community around the world, there is a core of ethical values that is basic to its society. Together we can identify those core elements of character without which our civility and our society cannot sustain themselves.

"By values we typically mean, as the Oxford English Dictionary confirms, those qualities that are 'worthy of esteem for [their] own sake' or have 'intrinsic worth.' Used by itself... the word usually suggests moral values, where moral... pertains to whatever is right, proper and good."
-Kidder (1994:322)

It is not enough for us to assume our common values—we must identify them, talk about them, and nurture them. Communities must set expectations and define core values. Schools must be empowered to teach, reinforce and nurture students in these basic values. Adults must model attitudes and behaviors that reflect those values. Students must hold themselves and their peers to high expectations, and be equipped with the skills to use these values to make good choices.

We have already taken the most important step: we have begun. The Maine Legislature has called for the development of "statewide standards for responsible and ethical student behavior." The task of this Commission is to define those standards.

The Maine Legislature has also called for every community in Maine to translate these standards into their own codes of conduct. This work must happen in every community with the involvement of large numbers of citizens, students, and educators using these standards to create codes of conduct embodying both their shared expectations for attitudes and behavior, and the consequences of violating those expectations. Although we do not in this report attempt to outline the details of a model code of conduct, our work is intended to help define the goals and strategies for this difficult and important next step, to be taken by citizens all over Maine.

We are confident that Maine people are prepared to address this problem squarely and undertake the hard work of comprehensive education and prevention. Fortunately, this problem is a challenge, not yet a crisis. Our strong communities give us a head start. Many promising initiatives are already underway. Many great tools are at hand. We hope this report provides a guide for their use.

Statewide Standards for Behavior

"In consultation with organizations representing school boards, school administrators, teachers, parents and other interested local officials and community members, the commissioner shall develop statewide standards for responsible and ethical student behavior."

-enacted Public Law 1999, Chapter 351

Local Codes of Conduct

"With input from educators, administrators, parents, students and community members, each school board shall adopt a district-wide student code of conduct consistent with the statewide standards for student behavior developed under section 254, subsection 11. The student code of conduct must:

A. Define unacceptable student behavior;

B. Establish standards of student responsibility for behavior;

C. Prescribe consequences for violation of the student code of conduct, including first-time violations, when appropriate;

D. Describe appropriate procedures for referring students in need of special services to those services;

E. Establish criteria to determine when further assessment of a current individual education plan is necessary, based on removal of the student from class;

F. Establish policies and procedures concerning the removal of disruptive or violent students from a classroom or a school bus, as well as student disciplinary and placement decisions, when appropriate; and

G. Establish guidelines and criteria concerning the appropriate circumstances when the superintendent or the superintendent's designee may provide information to the local police or other appropriate law enforcement authorities regarding an offense that involves violence committed by any person on school grounds or other school property.

The school board is responsible for ensuring that school officials inform students, parents, and community members of the student code of conduct."

-Maine Statutes, Title 20-A, Section 1001(15): Adoption of student code of conduct (enacted Public Law 1999, Chapter 351)

An Approach for Maine

Our path to a solution builds on the best of Maine and borrows from the best around the country and the world. We are certainly not the first state or community to grapple with the challenges of student behavior within a framework of values and ethics. For several years, a renewed focus on this approach—frequently referred to as character education—has been gathering momentum around the country. We believe that in Maine we have an opportunity to succeed in this effort in unsurpassed ways, if we are able to commit to solutions that are subtle and systemic rather than simplistic, and lasting rather than superficial in their outcomes.

Two central points about our approach:

First, our approach describes a long-term process of change in attitudes, structures, and climate in our schools and communities. Changing school structure and culture is a tremendous task that undoubtedly will take a long time fully to achieve. However, we believe that the changes we describe can have an immediate positive impact on how our schools look and feel and what happens there. Schools should expect and strive for some recognizable results now, even if—realistically—it may take time for this positive improvement to predominate. Success here is about community, consistency, and communication; these are features that do not change overnight and that need constant reaffirmation.

Second, our approach emphasizes expectations and education, not simply strengthening the rigor of conventional punishments and discipline. Concrete consequences and discipline have an essential role in teaching and maintaining responsible behavior. Immediate intervention is the first step in preventing the continuation of unacceptable behavior. Safety of students and others must, of course, be addressed as the top priority whenever the need for intervention arises. We must, however, begin to think about what happens prior to the point at which an intervention is necessary, and after an intervention occurs if we are to achieve positive, long-term change in behaviors and attitudes. The disciplinary process itself must teach students to make better choices. It should not be an exercise in humiliation, hurt, or exclusion. Thus we address discipline as an important component in creating an ethical and responsible school culture—but we do not begin with it.

We believe a successful approach for Maine:

- **Must be grounded in our history and our community.**
- **Must hear the voices of our students.**
- **Must be based in Maine's *Learning Results*.**
- **Must address the whole climate, and the systemic and structural issues in our schools and communities.**
- **Must empower educators, parents, community members, and especially students to expect, teach, model and enforce ethical and responsible behavior and build on what is already working.**
- **Must be measured and evaluated.**

Must be grounded in our history and our community.

Members of the Commission have tried to practice what we preach. At the state level, we have used creative means to include the voices of Maine citizens, including students, as an essential component of identifying community core values, setting standards and promoting ethical and responsible student behavior. At the community level, if the process of value identification is to be meaningful and the practice of standard-setting is to be effective, these values and standards must reflect the concerns and ideals of our citizens. This is not just an issue of "local control," it is an issue of local ownership and support for the desired outcomes. This focus on community involvement and the use of identified core values to inform practice is a departure from past approaches to fostering ethical and responsible student behavior.

Must hear the voices of our students.

We think it regrettable that this self-evident concept is still viewed as a radical one in some quarters. Students know their own behavior and that of their peers, and what drives it. Students have many powerful and surprising (to adults) things to say about what works, what doesn't, and how they can work as partners with adults to make change happen. The Commission developed the Student Interviewing Project, and relied on students as researchers and editors. We hope this example will inspire parallel efforts in schools and communities.

Must be based in Maine's *Learning Results*.

Maine's *Learning Results* sets standards for what students should know and what they should be able to do. *Learning Results* describes the student outcomes towards which all our educators and schools are working, but does not dictate the means or methods for achieving them. The standards for ethical and responsible behavior set forth here are intended to apply to and, elaborate on, the Guiding Principles of the *Learning Results*, and to complement the academic standards described in that document. Our mission is to set a context of values, provide students with content knowledge, build appropriate attitudes and teach students specific skills necessary to the development and exercise of good judgement and responsible behavior.

Must address the whole climate, and the systemic and structural issues in our schools and communities.

Any effort at instilling a sense of ethics and responsibility in our students must focus intensely on behavior, including the prevention and correction of harmful or unethical behavior. The focus, however, cannot be solely on student behavior. If parents, educators, and communities hope to foster ethical and responsible student behavior, systemic changes in the structures of our schools, in adult behavior and in the community are also required. We have attempted to describe, in Chapter Two, the positive attributes that can result from a willingness to address the needs of the school culture at a structural level. Although our focus here is grades K-12, these systemic changes overlap significantly with the recommendations of *Promising Futures* (1998), the report of the Commission on Secondary Education.

Must empower educators, parents, community members, and students to expect, teach, model and enforce ethical and responsible behavior and build on what is already working.

Changing climate and culture require that expectations for responsibility be communicated, and that interventions be made whenever, wherever, and by whoever is on the scene—including a student's peers. All involved need to be empowered and supported so that it is clear that intervention is appropriate and desirable. The current uncertainty and reluctance about roles, where many adults and students feel they are going out on a limb or taking an isolated stance, must be reversed. There is a tendency to focus corrective efforts on reduction of the worst incidents of bad behavior, and our recommendations will lead to such a reduction. However, the approach we have taken is not purely punitive, nor is it about "troublemakers" or "at-risk" children or youth. We address the needs of all students—and the corresponding positive roles that all adults can play in their interactions with students.

Many positive initiatives are already underway that can provide the vehicle for such empowerment: for example, The Children's Cabinet, Maine's Promise, Civil Rights Teams, mentoring, public health prevention efforts, parent involvement, conflict resolution and peer mediation, service learning, and restorative justice programs.

Must be measured and evaluated.

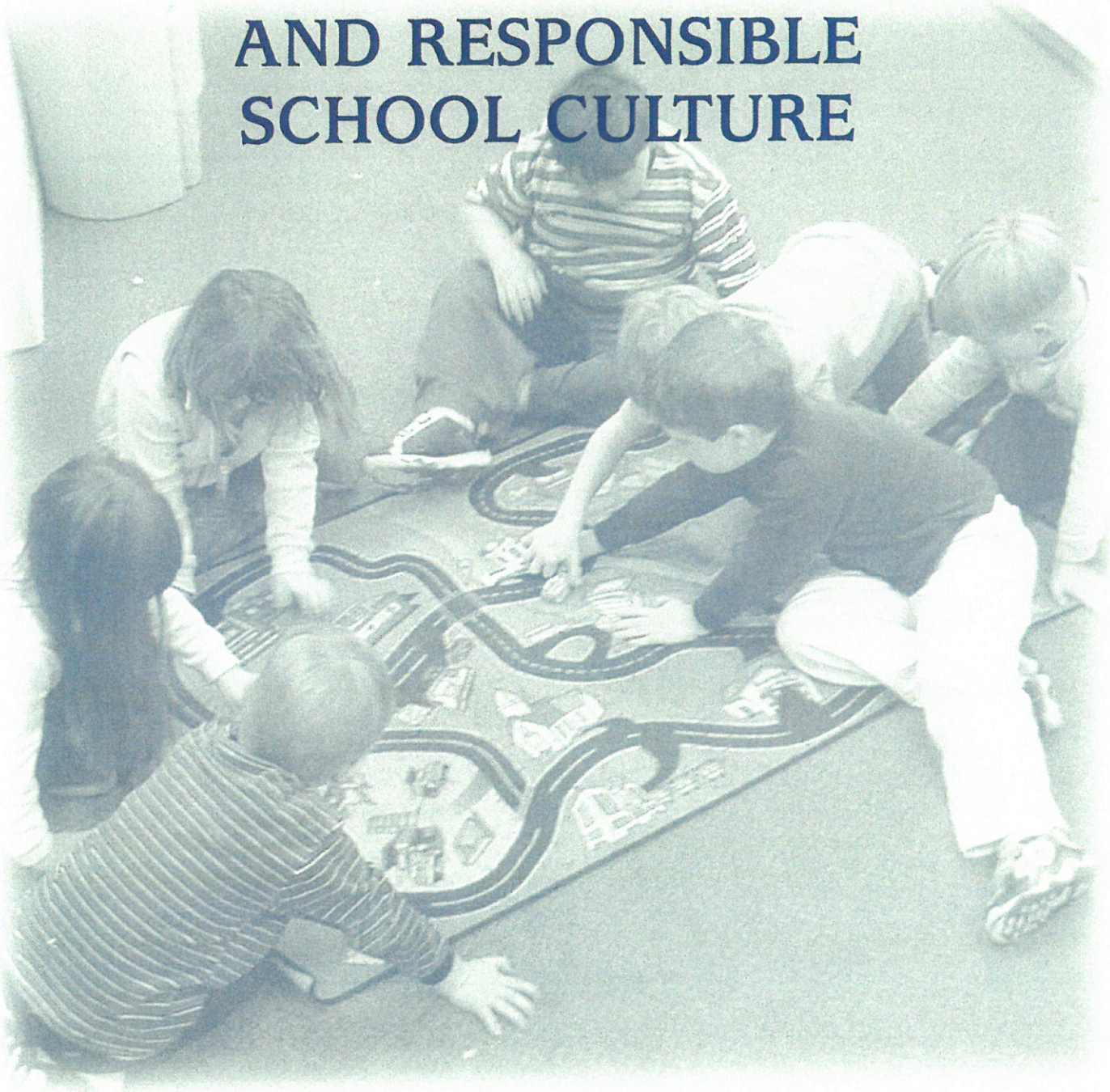
In order to sustain systemic changes and improved student behavior, there must be a mechanism to evaluate and measure desired outcomes. These evaluations must go beyond simple measures of the most negative student behaviors (e.g., the number of bomb threats) to include measures of the positive values, attitudes, and skills demonstrated by members of the school community. Evaluation is critical to the continued improvement and sustainability of an ethical and responsible school culture.

NAVIGATING THE REPORT

The following sections of our report explain the connection between our mission and Maine's *Learning Results*. We provide a guide to the visible characteristics or Hallmarks, that reflect a school and community committed to a culture of ethics and responsibility. This report also focuses on the process that must involve a whole community to ensure success. We provide core values and standards—values that should be adapted and customized by each community. We also offer concrete examples of practices that illustrate compelling efforts by real Maine schools to wrestle with the expectations presented in this report.

CHAPTER TWO

HALLMARKS OF AN ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE SCHOOL CULTURE



FOUNDATIONS FOR BUILDING AN ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE SCHOOL CULTURE

"All through school you've seen kids falling through the cracks that never got the attention they needed . . . ."

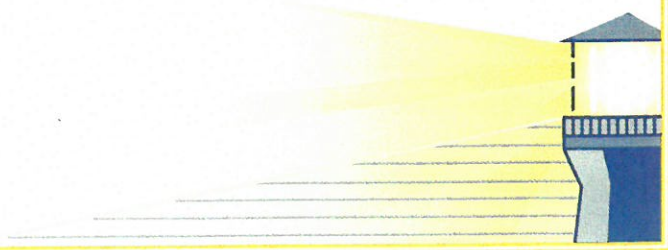
A High School Student

In order for the Hallmarks, standards and community-identified core values in this report to impact the lives of individual students and community members, schools must have a strong foundation in place, predicated on the following:

- Institutional structures, including school and class sizes, that promote caring student-teacher relationships;
- Community involvement in the school environment;
- A school structure that respects democratic principles and fosters a sense of belonging;
- A focus on the individual strengths of students in planning and facilitating personalized learning; and
- Recognition of the critical role of values in learning and teaching, including the provision of time and resources for professional development.

"As individuals... can model... [s]o too can a school, by its collective signals and its tangible priorities, 'model' what is worthy and what is not."

-Sizer and Sizer (1999:4)



Hallmarks of an Ethical and Responsible School Culture

The following Hallmarks are essential to the creation of a caring environment in which ethical and responsible behavior can take root and flourish. Ethical and responsible student behavior is the desired outcome. We have labeled as Hallmarks the characteristics of school culture—the structures, expectations and actions—that will lead to this outcome. They should guide the development of each local school district's code of conduct, and the actions necessary to support and enforce the codes. It is also important for communities to recognize that no single Hallmark stands alone. These Hallmarks are meant to function together and are all essential characteristics of an ethical and responsible school culture. Each Hallmark is further described in the pages that follow.

Core Values

A. Collectively identified core values are the cornerstone of all school and community efforts to create and sustain an ethical and responsible school culture.

Community Process and Participation

B. The entire community is welcomed and meaningfully involved in the process of value identification, standard setting and the enforcement of standards.

C. Students are welcomed and involved in the process of value identification, standard setting and the enforcement of standards.

Adult Roles and Responsibilities

D. There is an active and genuine partnership between schools and parents.

E. All adults who interact with students, in and out of school, strive to model and reinforce ethical and responsible behavior.

F. Teachers are authorized and expected to teach, model and enforce ethical and responsible behavior.

Integration and Inclusion

G. Efforts to promote ethical and responsible behavior are an integrated part of the school's curriculum and culture, and are not viewed as "extra."

H. Ethical and responsible student behavior is actively promoted and recognized.

I. Teaching and learning ethical and responsible behavior begins in early childhood.

J. Students apply and demonstrate principles of ethical and responsible behavior in the classroom and beyond the classroom.

Disciplinary Process

K. The disciplinary process is interventionist, inclusive, impartial, consistent, and educational.

Outcomes and Assessment

L. Outcomes are well-defined and assessed regularly.

A. *Collectively identified core values are the cornerstone of all school and community efforts to create and sustain an ethical and responsible school culture.*

Before a community or school can design policies or practices aimed at creating an ethical and responsible school culture, it must determine the values that will be the basis for those policies and practices. Actions taken to foster ethical and responsible behavior must fall within a framework of community core values.

To set and enforce standards for student behavior, students, teachers, parents and community members must share a common language and understanding of core community values. Community members must also ask themselves, "What indicators will tell us whether or not our values are being implemented?" "How will we define respect?" Such questions must be answered for each value.

> "...community participation...is absolutely critical in identifying the core values. Participation should reflect the diversity in the community."
>
> -Huffman (1994:17)

CORE VALUES FOR MAINE

Respect
Honesty
Compassion
Fairness
Responsibility
Courage

– Taking Responsibility, Chapter Four

SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- **Provide opportunities for community members to contribute to the working definitions and behavior indicators for core values.**
- **Publicize definitions and indicators for values throughout the community.**
- **Base the school mission statement and code of ethics on community identified core values.**

B. *The entire community is welcomed and meaningfully involved in the process of value identification, standard setting and the enforcement of standards.*

Schools or communities engaging in a process of value identification and standard setting must ensure that those involved in the process are representative of the diversity in the community. All community members must be welcome in the deliberative process regardless of age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, marital status, religion, or socio-economic class.

Community leaders must go beyond simply extending a general invitation to participate, instead actively reaching out to all community members to ensure that no segment of the population is denied a voice. The standards of ethical and responsible behavior that are promoted in the community's schools must reflect the community's core values, developed through an interplay of views and voices.

> "Sharing control over schools involves not just listening to diverse needs but demonstrating that they were heard. To involve parents and citizens in the work of schools is to make them partners in decision-making. To truly listen to students is to be influenced by what they say and take steps to ensure that they see the relevance of reform efforts."
>
> -Annenberg Institute (50)

The initial outreach and collaboration are only the beginning. Collaboration must be ongoing. When communities revisit and reaffirm or modify their standards on a regular basis, the likelihood of maintaining community ownership of the standards, and of achieving and sustaining desired outcomes, increases greatly.

SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- **Invite all to participate, generate and comment on a values list.**
- **Bring in speakers to address the importance of ethical values and the need for shared community values.**
- **Link students with community members through mentoring and service learning initiatives.**

C. *Students are welcomed and involved in the process of value identification, standard setting and the enforcement of standards.*

"Ethics are really important to me because they help me make good decisions. It's really important for me to respect people and get that same kind of respect back."

A High School Sophomore

Each of us has a strong tendency to live up or down to the expectations which others hold for us. Students are no exception. Educators and other adults must treat students as trustworthy and responsible—and give them the opportunities and support to live up to this expectation. The Commission sought to give students such a role in gathering data and outlining and editing components of this report.

Allowing students meaningful roles in the decisions about the operation of schools is a significant step in providing opportunities for responsibility. In matters of discipline, expenditures, maintaining school property, even in the realm of curricular and extra-curricular issues, students have valuable insights and are fully capable of seriously addressing these issues when they are presented in age-appropriate ways.

Students must have a sense of ownership of standards for ethical and responsible behavior. Students are empowered to develop such a sense of ownership when adults take them seriously—when they are fully involved, and when all adults, in turn, avoid inconsistency and hypocrisy by holding high expectations for all students.

Standards for ethical and responsible behavior cannot be viewed by students as arbitrary regulations imposed upon them by adults, if they are to be internalized and consistently practiced by students. This can happen only if involvement is meaningful and not merely symbolic. Adults must demonstrate respect for students to the same degree that they demand respect from students.

Students also should be taught and involved in the methods they can use to set or shift expectations with their own peers. For example, students can understand how they or other students may be subtly harassing or excluding another and how the quiet majority can reach out to a victim of bullying by making a friend, or bringing adults into a situation when intervention is needed. Students must be actors and not just bystanders in setting or changing the school culture.

SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- **Give every student access to a positive role model—at least one adult who knows and understands him or her.**
- **Empower students with opportunities to practice decision-making skills and demonstrate ethical and responsible behavior in real, meaningful situations.**
- **Involve students by providing opportunities to model and enforce standards of ethical and responsible student behavior.**

D. *There is an active and genuine partnership between schools and parents.*

Parental involvement and guidance are crucial factors in accomplishing our goal of graduating well-educated students who are good people. Achieving this goal requires the input and support of all parents. Not only are parents a child's first teachers, but studies show that parents, even during the adolescent years, have the potential to wield substantial influence over their children's behavior and choice of friends. (Chen 2000: 361).

Parents and schools share a duty to instill in students a sense of what it means to be an ethical and responsible person. Parents have a duty to remain informed about and interested in their children's school experience; schools have a duty to reach out to all parents. Through collaboration and partnership, parents and educators will come to a clearer understanding of the critical role that values play in shaping a student's intellectual and emotional development. Moreover, this partnership will ensure a more consistent message is delivered to students, not only in disciplinary situations but also in reinforcing positive behaviors. By interacting regularly and respectfully with one another, parents and educators will be practicing one of the most effective methods of teaching ethical and responsible behavior: they will be modeling such behavior.

"School, as an institution, may help reinforce ethics. Your friends may help mold ethics. But home is the most important place for ethics to be taught."

A High School Senior

"Parents need to interact with their children more. Help them with their homework and personal issues. Do things with them on a one-on-one basis... ."

A 53 Year-O'd Woman

"Families and schools need to interlock in a cooperative way that encourages the child's learning and maturing as a social being. Children must not experience family and school as worlds apart... "

-Henderson et al. (1986:17)

SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- **Provide parents a forum for participation in the values definition process.**
- **Work with parents to supplement and support the values-related work students and teachers are undertaking in school.**
- **Maintain active, ongoing communication with individual students and their parents.**

E. *All adults who interact with students, in and out of school, strive to model and reinforce ethical and responsible behavior.*

"Adults should not be hypocritical. We also need to be able to trust them."
A High School Senior

"All adults influence kids."
A Group Interview with 4 Teenagers

"I mean, how many children really know an ethical person?"
40-Year-Old High School English Teacher

Students interact with adults, other than teachers, on a daily basis and the duty to teach, model and enforce ethical and responsible behavior extends to all adults in the school and community. Standards of ethical and responsible behavior must be demonstrated in the classroom, the faculty lounges, the hallways, the playground, the locker rooms, the cafeterias, on the sports fields and the school buses as well as in the streets and the public spaces of the community, by students and adults alike. Coaches must demonstrate sportsmanship while teaching athletic skills; parents must demonstrate respect in disagreements they may have with teachers and administrators.

Students must be shown that the demands of an ethical culture do not fall on them alone, but that all members of the community have an obligation to act ethically and responsibly toward each other, regardless of roles. Adults must be trained, expected, and supported to intervene promptly and consistently to stop language and behavior that is exclusionary, demeaning, harassing or bullying. And students must come to view such intervention as consistent, inevitable, and protective if they are to invoke and respect it.

In Maine, 37% of surveyed third graders report that when they told an adult they were being bullied the bullying either got worse or stayed the same.
-Maine Project Against Bullying

SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- **Encourage and facilitate mentoring by exemplary adults.**
- **Utilize ethical standards in setting professional expectations and responsibilities for all school personnel to participate in the creation of an ethical school culture.**
- **Train adults in the proven strategies for preventing and intervening in cases of harassing or hateful language and/or behavior.**

F. *Teachers are authorized and expected to teach, model and enforce ethical and responsible behavior.*

Students report that 71% of the teachers or other adults in the classroom ignored bullying incidents.

-Maine Project Against Bullying

To successfully participate in the establishment of an ethical and responsible school culture, teachers must understand and commit to the community-identified values, and be empowered, authorized, and supported by the community. In addition, teachers must be equipped with the training and tools necessary for effective teaching and interventions in the context of the community's core values.

Because the values to be reinforced in the school are grounded in the shared values of the broad community, the teacher is empowered in a way that he or she would not be if the task at hand were to instruct students in the teacher's own values. As part of this empowerment, school leaders and teachers must make professional choices about the classroom strategies and activities that will express and reinforce the shared values. The choice of these strategies and activities, like the identification of the values, will require deliberation, inclusion, communication, and respectful compromise. This process is key to the realization of values within the school environment.

Teachers must be equipped and supported to enable students to recognize and act on positive values which we should all strive to demonstrate. Honoring these values demands that teachers intervene promptly and consistently to end harassment, teasing, bullying, exclusionary behavior, foul language, and violence whenever they occur. Finally, some issues of student behavior go beyond values or attitudes, and are rooted in the medical, developmental, or psychological needs of the student. Teachers and other school personnel must be equipped with resources, and provided with appropriate options, to assess and address the needs of such students.

"Teachers and other community members must serve as educators, mentors and mediators."

A Teacher and Mother of 3

"Educate both teachers and students that respect goes both ways and should be earned equally."

A 34 Year-Old Woman

"I think it is the teacher's role, to not necessarily instill their own values..., but to encourage students to have their own values..."

A High School Junior

SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- **Provide the time and resources for professional development for all teachers to support efforts to teach, model and enforce ethical and responsible behavior.**
- **Support teachers in applying ethical practices in their classrooms and throughout the school.**
- **Provide strong administrative leadership and seek widespread community support.**

G. *Efforts to promote ethical and responsible behavior are an integrated part of the school's curriculum and culture and are not viewed as "extra."*

> "Having determined the values the community can support, the next task is to develop ways of nurturing those values through the school's culture and its instructional programs."
>
> -Huffman (1994: 7)

A curriculum that holistically supports the examination of real life issues will assist students in understanding the integral role ethics plays in their day-to-day lives. "Ethics" is not a separate course, or a club for interested people, or community service during school vacation, and cannot be treated that way in the establishment of the school's curriculum. The examination of real–life ethical issues, within the required curriculum, ensures that students will be taught both the reality, and the real impact of, ethical and unethical behaviors. Each core discipline—social studies, science and technology, English language arts, and others—includes opportunities to grapple with the ethical dimensions of political and economic choices, scientific discoveries, or literary integrity. Ethics becomes a facet of each area of inquiry. This promotes opportunities for students to act on their understanding of what it means to be a truly ethical and responsible individual.

Ethics must also be fully integrated into all facets of school life. This includes classrooms, faculty lounges, sport fields/arenas, hallways, playgrounds, locker rooms, cafeterias, and school buses—and ultimately, the home, the mall, and the world beyond. Ethical and responsible behavior must be a priority not only of teachers, but also of all school personnel and the community at large.

SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- **Integrate an ethical dimension into each content area.**
- **Provide the time and resources for professional development for all school personnel—not just teachers—to support efforts to teach, model and enforce ethical and responsible behavior.**
- **Develop individualized learning plans that incorporate an ethical dimension for all students.**

H. *Ethical and responsible student behavior is actively promoted and recognized.*

In order to sustain ethical and responsible behavior, students must view such behavior as meaningful, necessary, and rewarding. An incident-based approach to student behavior currently predominates in many schools. Such an approach can lead to treatment of behavior issues in a fragmented fashion. There also tends to be a significant amount of attention and effort devoted to negative incidents—and very little at all to positive incidents. Schools need to create systems of positive recognition that complement their negative recognition for inappropriate behavior.

Embedded in the structure of most school systems is an ideology of competition that operates in academic, athletic and social settings. A greater focus on ethical and responsible behavior may lead to an examination of the issue of competition itself, and the ways in which competition for the sake of only winning admiration or material reward may contribute to a school culture that is lacking in the realm of ethics and responsibility. In the course of their education, students who excel academically, athletically or socially are provided with formal and informal recognition and rewards for their competitively-achieved successes. Competition, however, is healthy only when it is conducted within the parameters of the community's identified core values and when it is not promoted at the expense of cooperation. A community's core values should promote cooperation alongside healthy competition in the academic, athletic, and social facets of a school's culture. Those who demonstrate excellent character must be recognized for their achievement just as are those who are academically, athletically or socially skilled.

Beyond the extrinsic recognition and material rewards from others, students need also to develop an understanding that ethical and responsible behavior has its own intrinsic and long-term rewards. Students must recognize that the application of ethical principles will help them face real situations in which their values may conflict with one another. The teaching and practice of ethical issue-spotting and decision-making skills, and the recognition of the value of making wise decisions, will help build the confidence and optimism required to sustain the core values in a broader context.

Staff members of Sidney's Bean School go beyond enforcing consequences for unacceptable behavior. They balance the responsibility of maintaining physical and emotional safety with positive reinforcement through their Caught Ya Practice. Whenever and wherever an adult or a peer sees a child demonstrating helpfulness, politeness, or kindness they acknowledge that child by including his or her name in a monthly drawing in which the winner receives a small prize.

SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- **Develop recognition systems for positive behavior, with input from students, that provide feedback to many students on a daily, consistent basis without embarassing the recipient.**
- **Create learning environments that support and reward cooperative learning and teaching.**
- **Communicate and collaborate regularly with parents and community to draw positive attention to ethical behavior and reinforce school-based recognition efforts beyond the school walls.**

I. *Teaching and learning ethical and responsible behavior begins in early childhood.*

Discussions of student behavior and ethical issues often focus on the prohibited behaviors of middle and high school students such as substance abuse, foul language, violence, and defiance of family and school rules. Many programs—from Civil Rights Teams to service learning—have been primarily targeted at these behavior patterns manifested by adolescents.

To foster a society of ethically sound adolescent and adult citizens, the habits of and commitment to ethical and responsible behavior must be modeled and taught during the preschool and primary school years. Scientific research consistently reveals that the first three years of a child's life are a critical time for physical, cognitive, and emotional development. It is during these early years that a child learns, through the modeling and instruction of the adults and older children around them, how to relate to the larger community. Young children, in their own terms, can recognize ethical dilemmas and articulate the importance of personal and communal responsibility.

Communities and schools must actively work with parents, preschools, and early childhood programs to ensure that adults working with young children understand the importance of an early grounding in ethics and appropriate behavior. Information must be shared on the difference between "kids being kids" and situations where active intervention is necessary.

"If your friend gets teased you stick up for them."
A Fifth Grade Student

"[When you are responsible, you] don't blame other people for what you did."
First Grade Student

"[Respect is shown by] being a good sport and saying 'good game' even if you lose."
First Grade Student

"I believe that these stories straight out of elementary school are just as important to our Commission as the straightforward answers are... I found it very interesting that I could ask questions about ethics and other complicated issues to an eight-year old and learn such valuable lessons."
A Student Interviewer

SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- **Work with young children to recognize and name ethical issues within the appropriate context.**
- **Utilize older children as age-appropriate mentors to young children.**
- **Seize opportunities—including the parenting education curriculum for current students—to empower current and future parents to address attitudinal and behavior issues.**

J. *Ethical and responsible behavior is exhibited in the classroom and beyond the classroom.*

A broad and ingrained sense of ethics will arm students to avoid, or recognize and resolve, ethical challenges. Educators must ensure that students develop a deep understanding of ethics that spans all three dimensions of ethics and responsibility.

The first dimension is knowing (cognition); skills are needed to recognize ethical issues and analyze situations for their ethical significance. The second dimension is feeling (emotion); empathy is a capacity that must be developed and nurtured. And the third dimension is acting (behavior); this dimension often requires not only cognitive and emotional intelligence, but also real courage in the face of moral dilemmas or peer pressure. Schools are in a unique position to assist students in acting courageously in the face of peer pressure.

If students are to grow into ethical and responsible individuals, they must learn from an early age that there are shared values that must be upheld to ensure the existence and development of our society. Decision-making skills are of little utility in the absence of ethical awareness and moral courage. Students must develop the skill to recognize ethical situations and to identify the right course of action; and they must find the courage to act upon these values. They will, if teachers and other adults are good models.

"You have to live them [values] in order to enforce them."
A Business Owner and Father of 1

"It is not what I am, but who I am!"
High School Student and OutRight Member

"Being ethical is not an event—it is who you are."
A High School Sophomore

Beyond the classroom, subtle exclusion or denigration of students in other groups or cliques can have a powerful detrimental effect on a school's climate. Working across such exclusionary groupings needs to be taught and not assumed: students report that they readily self-segregate by perceived status, interest, or ability. Schools should provide academic and extra-curricular activities that foster and support the community-identified values through opportunities for students and adults to interact across contexts, roles and stereotypes.

"Bullying most often occurs at school where there is minimal or no supervision (e.g. playground, hallways, cafeteria)."
-Maine Project Against Bullying

SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- **Provide service learning opportunities.**
- **Train students in and support peer tutoring and conflict resolution programs.**
- **Foster and commit to democratic school structures and practices.**

K. *The disciplinary process is interventionist, inclusive, impartial, consistent, and educational.*

> *"A code could be effective if enforced in a way the students would know it is more than words on a page. There can be no exceptions, total equality."*
>
> A High School Senior

Discipline should be implemented in a way that includes opportunities for students to learn and opportunities for adults to teach. When a student is to be disciplined, the occasion should be viewed by all involved as a moment to teach and restore, rather than a moment of reckoning. After intervention, the focus must turn to education and restoration.

Schools must start with a thoughtful, consistently applied system of interventions and consequences for inappropriate behavior. In any disciplinary process, it is important to assess the situation, taking note of such factors as the age of the students, the nature of the offense, and whether an incident is an isolated one or one of a series of disciplinary problems.

"Zero tolerance" policies and attitudes have become prevalent across the nation in response to some violent and catastrophic incidents in a handful of schools. Safety is paramount. However, the implementation of "zero-tolerance" policies has often been aimed at individuals and not at behavior. Punishments based on zero tolerance policies that focus on removal of the offender, and not on correcting harm or educating the offender, are incomplete at best and counterproductive at worst. Such policies fail to resolve either the underlying behavior problem or its impact on the victim and the community. Schools should instead take a positive/preventive approach to student discipline, one that begins with intervening immediately to stop the offending behavior, but moves beyond that to educational and restorative steps.

Restorative discipline focuses on the effects of unacceptable behavior rather than on the rules that have been broken. All those involved in an incident of unethical or irresponsible behavior—whether perpetrator or victim—have a stake in its resolution. This approach starts with accountability by the offender and then moves to develop a resolution to problematic behaviors that focuses on redress to the victim and/or the school community. Students are to be held accountable for their actions, but the end result of the process may vary from situation to situation within a general framework for applying restorative discipline. (Toews 2000: 8). Restorative discipline techniques require flexibility and a commitment to the idea that each situation and each student is unique.

> According to the Maine Bullying Project,"... without intervention, bullies identified by age eight are six times more likely to be convicted of a crime by the age of twenty-four and five times more likely to end up with serious criminal records by the age of thirty."

SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- **Couch discipline in terms of values, not rules (i.e., "you were disrespectful to this student" vs. "you're not allowed to tease people").**
- **Involve students in the development of the disciplinary code, and ask them to sign an agreement to abide by the code.**
- **Implement anti-bullying practices across all grade levels.**

L. *Outcomes are well-defined and assessed regularly.*

Policies and practices focused on issues of student behavior are like other education policies or practices—they must be subject to evaluation and any necessary revision. Evaluation of practices and policies in the realm of student behavior is critical for improving programs, curriculum, practices or school structure. Data that may be useful in the measurement of change in student behavior include: attitudinal and incident data, youth at-risk data, school health data, data from evaluation of service learning programs, and assessments embedded in the curriculum.

To be effective, assessment must extend beyond student behavior and skills to address the progress of the school as an institution, and the behavior and skills of school staff.

Evaluation is not separate from other efforts to create and sustain an ethical school culture. Rather, it is an integral part of a comprehensive strategy for achieving this goal. Evaluation techniques will be customized to suit the approaches of individual schools or districts, but in each case, baseline data will provide a critical starting point for identifying outcomes, determining the strategies for achieving them, and measuring success in reaching those outcomes.

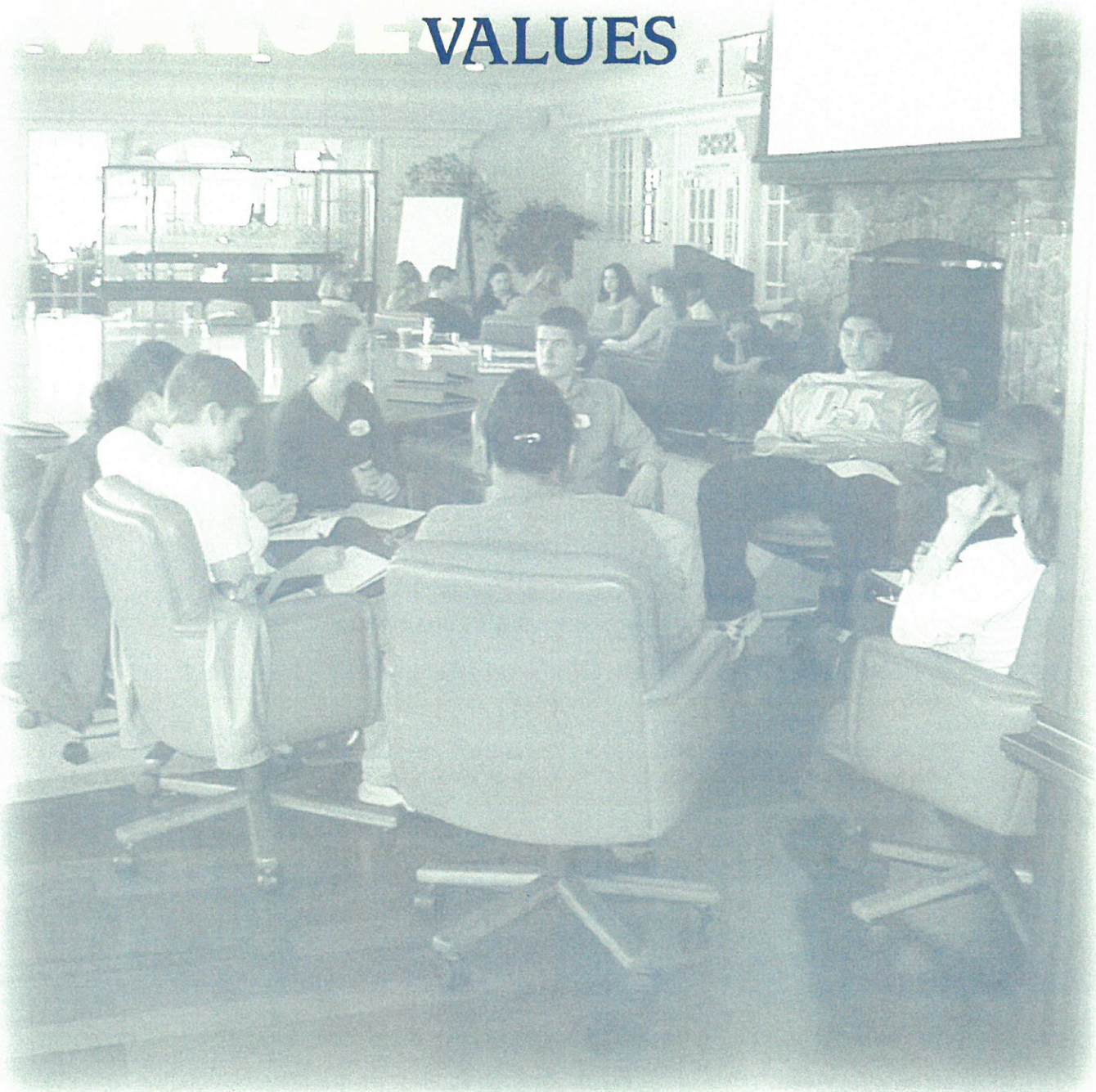
> "Evaluation of character education should assess the character of the school, the school staff's functioning as character educators, and the extent to which students manifest good character,"
>
> -Lickona et al. (1991)

SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- **Use multiple sources of data and begin assessment when the school year or program begins and assess continuously.**
- **Use the school or district mission statement as a basis for designing the assessment intruments.**
- **Evaluate student attitudes, but also assess cognitive understanding of core values, behavioral indicators, decision-making, and their implications.**

CHAPTER THREE

IDENTIFYING COMMUNITY VALUES



The community is the source of the values that govern ethical and responsible student behavior. "Community" includes all citizens of the towns that use the local schools. We all want our children to function ethically, responsibly and successfully in the complex world we share. The issue for educators and parents then becomes: What is the most effective way to instill a sense of right and wrong in our children? It is essential that communities come together to identify those values that matter to them, and then translate those values into standards of behavior for students and all those connected to the education of our children. But can we, as a community, agree on common values and standards of behavior? How do we agree without choosing some person's or group's values over those of others?

The question, "Whose values will you teach?", often is posed when the issue of teaching values arises. Each community should answer, "Ours." The assumption underlying such an answer is that common values can be identified and embraced by a community; it is not difficult, in fact, to identify core values common to us all. The problem is that we often confuse values or ethics with specific political ideologies or religious convictions. Each of us may have personal convictions or standards of behavior taught to us by our parents, family or church, but it would be inappropriate to assume these convictions are the common standard. In order to develop common core values, we must both hold to individual convictions and demonstrate respect for differences. In fact, common core values should embrace respect by refraining from judgment about others' lifestyles and beliefs. Values and ethical standards are broader than individual or group perspectives on specific political or religious issues or lifestyles.

Core values, such as honesty and compassion, have repeatedly been found to transcend political ideologies, religious convictions, and cultural differences. Our core values are those attributes that are so fundamental to civility that none of us would wish to live in a society that lacked them. Rushworth Kidder summarizes his research on this point in his book, *Shared Values for a Troubled World*. Through a compilation of interviews with a globally diverse group of men and women, Kidder discovers that there are, in effect, a set of eight universally-held core values: love, truthfulness, fairness, freedom, unity, tolerance, responsibility, and respect for life. This moral common ground, or universal code, is nearly identical to the lists of values developed separately by numerous groups Kidder has worked with all around the United States.

Because core, universal values do exist that define expectations for civil behavior in a community, the critical question becomes, what kind of deliberative, inclusive process will the community use to identify, define, and put values into action? Without an inclusive process, the choice of values risks seeming arbitrary or unrepresentative. The process not only provides legitimacy, it also invests members of the community with an understanding and commitment to the core values they identify collectively.

"A community's functioning rests on trust, and trust comes from the understanding that emerges from dialogue."
-Sizer and Sizer (1999: 17)

We provide an outline of core values that the Commission has identified as fundamental; however, we strongly urge each school district and community not to bypass or shortcut the process of defining its own core values. By engaging in a process that is inclusive, students, school staff, and community members will develop a sense of ownership with respect to local codes of conduct. The result will be communities, schools, and students that are empowered to enforce the code, and are committed to practicing it.

"The purpose of ... public engagement... is to channel a community's concern, apathy, or anger into informed, constructive action."

-Annenberg Institute (7)

The need for a process of inclusive community involvement does not end with the identified core values. Even in a community with consensus around the core values, there may be disagreement about the choice of strategies and tactics for achieving the values. Community acceptance and endorsement of these strategies, tactics and activities, like the identification of the values, will require deliberation, inclusion, communication, and respectful compromise. The identification of core values as the desired ends establishes the context within which the subsequent deliberations and respectful compromises about methods take place.





A Process for Community Value Identification

KEY FEATURES OF THE PROCESS

- **The process is inclusive of all community stakeholders.**
- **The process is deliberative and cooperative, not oppositional.**

GOALS OF THE PROCESS

- **To identify shared community values;**
- **To define values in operational and behavioral dimensions; and**
- **To put values into action through agreed-upon strategies and tactics.**

STEPS IN THE PROCESS

1. Objectively identify community members. Differences in lifestyles or politics are not a justification for exclusion from this process.
2. Convene a diverse and representative group of community members to discuss and identify community values and expectations for behavior.
3. Ask community members to imagine that the task is to choose a certain number of values to be engraved above the main entries of all local schools, as the values the community wants for itself and the schools' students.
4. As a large group, brainstorm as many values or qualities as possible that describe what it means to be a good person. Include everybody's ideas.
5. Ask each person to write a list of no more than eight values that he or she believes to be the most important. Ideally, these values would be distinct from each other and would represent only those qualities essential to being an ethical human being.
6. Divide into small groups where individuals can share their lists and collectively narrow the choices down to one list of no more than eight values that everyone agrees to.
7. Reconvene the large group and have each smaller group post its list on a wall. As a large group, work together until a single list has been agreed to. Remember, space over the entrance is limited, so the final list should have only 5 to 8 words. You will find that many of the values overlap and can be consolidated.
8. When a final list has been agreed on, develop and agree to several behavioral indicators as standards for each value. For example, how does an honest person behave? How does a respectful person behave?
9. Identify potential outcomes that will result from consistently engaging in the behaviors just discussed. In other words, what are hallmarks of how an ethical and responsible school looks and feels—to students, to teachers, to parents, to the community?
10. Develop a community or school action plan. Discuss ways to share the recommendations with others and to put the values into action. In other words, what will we adopt to achieve our goals: at home? at school? and in the community?

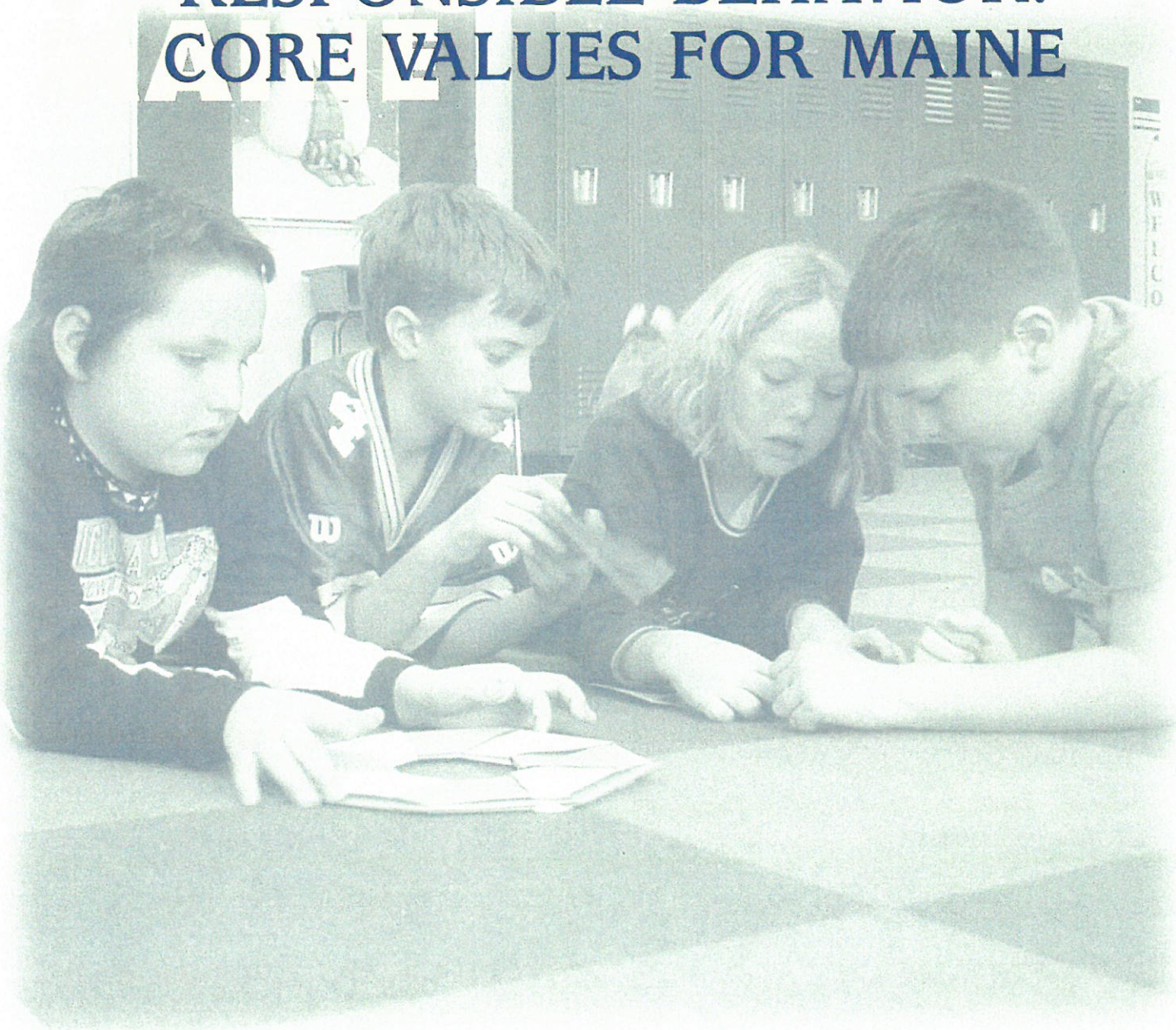
PORTRAITS OF TWO COMMUNITIES ENGAGING IN A PROCESS OF VALUE IDENTIFICATION

- Fort Fairfield had wanted to work on character education since 1994. When UNUM agreed to support such an initiative, they were the first to sign onto the project. Community members and teachers each attended a one-day facilitated seminar. A follow-up session for teachers was held in September 1996. A total of twenty community members and twenty teachers took part in the program. Both groups agreed on the following list of core values: honesty, responsibility, respect, compassion, justice, and cooperation. One lead teacher was identified in the elementary school and one in the high school. These two teachers continue to lead the values work in the schools to this day.

- The Orono community first got excited about character education after hearing an evening presentation by Dr. Rushworth Kidder. Following that evening, the community asked the Institute for Global Ethics to engage three groups in the process: a group of community members, the class of 1998, and all middle school teachers. With the advent of the UNUM-funded project, another group of twenty participants engaged in the process, as did all forty high school teachers. Common values selected on all five lists included respect and responsibility. Honesty was on four lists. Fairness, caring, and tolerance were common to three lists. Since that time, the values process and ethical decision-making framework have been integrated into the ninth grade curriculum and into Orono's service learning program.

CHAPTER FOUR

STANDARDS FOR ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR: CORE VALUES FOR MAINE



The Commission itself engaged in the process outlined in Chapter Three. We agreed to a set of values or standards that mattered to us as a "community" of representative voices, and then proceeded to define these values by developing a list of illustrative behaviors for each. The values and behaviors represented here are fundamental to a caring, civil society. These values and behaviors describe a commitment to respect, tolerance of diversity, and the overall well-being and safety of all.

These values and indicators are our standards for ethical and responsible student behavior. Our list is by no means exhaustive or exclusive, and the language of these behavioral indicators should vary as appropriate (e.g., for third grade students vs. twelfth grade students). However, the intent and spirit of these standards must remain intact. In our view, it is consistent with the mandate from the Legislature—to set statewide standards that will serve as a guide for local codes of conduct—for the Commission to describe fundamental values, to declare these expectations to be common for all, but to simultaneously urge that these values be customized and adapted by each community.

Our standards embrace positive values that we should all strive to demonstrate in our behavior. Honoring these values demands that adults and fellow students intervene promptly and consistently to end harassment, teasing, bullying, exclusionary behavior, foul language, and violence wherever and whenever they occur. While the expression of these values can and should vary across communities, Maine schools must—at a minimum—ensure that all within their walls will find respect, tolerance, and safety.

We strongly urge schools and communities to engage in this process themselves. Such engagement will result in a sense of ownership that cannot be achieved by simply adopting another group's list of values. The standards here will serve as the reference point for the nature and scope of the core values developed in each community. We recognize, however, that some schools and communities may choose to consider a pre-existing list of values as a starting point. Wherever the community begins its process, the school or community must recognize the critical importance of collective affirmation of these values by that particular community, and must incorporate the fundamentals of inclusiveness and deliberation outlined in the process in Chapter Three.

CORE VALUES

	AN ETHICAL PERSON IS...
Respect	*Respectful of Others and Self*
Honesty	*Honest in all Academic Endeavors and Interpersonal Relationships*
Compassion	*Compassionate in Dealing with the Limitations and Sufferings of Others*
Fairness	*Fair in Dealing With Others*
Responsibility	*Responsible for Personal Actions as an Individual and a Member of the Community*
Courage	*Courageous in the Face of Ethical Challenges*



A person who is RESPECTFUL of others and self

DOES...

- Appreciate and honor diversity.
- Tolerate views and beliefs that differ from personal views and beliefs.
- Support and contribute to healthful habits and safe environments for self and others.

DOES NOT...

- Engage in harmful behavior such as substance abuse or sexual promiscuity.
- Participate in activities that have the potential to cause physical or emotional harm.
- Make derogatory statements about another's gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, religion, disability, intellect or appearance.

"Respect is a unifying, universal value."

A High School Student

A person who is HONEST in all academic endeavors and interpersonal relationships

DOES...

- Seek to speak the truth, respectfully.
- Understand the difference between collaboration and collusion.
- Recognize that trust is an essential component of all relationships, including relationships with peers, parents, teachers, and co-workers.

DOES NOT...

- Plagiarize the work of others, including fellow students, siblings, or parents.
- Engage in secretive, sneaky, fraudulent or manipulative behavior.
- Take or damage the property of others.

"I think respect and understanding is all we need. With those two qualities, all other issues needed for a good environment would fall in place."

A High School Sophomore

A person who is COMPASSIONATE in dealing with the limitations and sufferings of others

DOES...

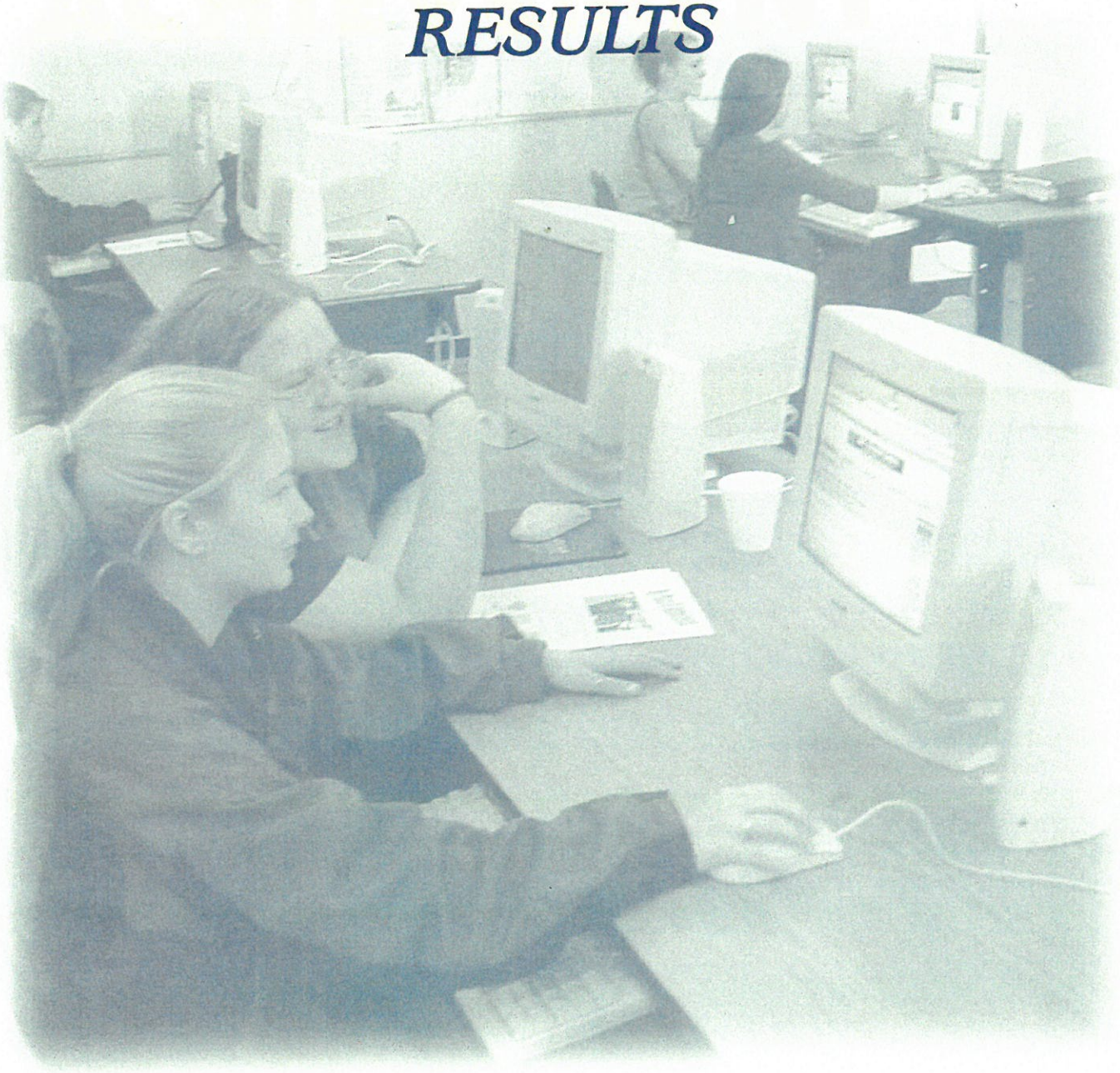
- Treat all people with kindness.
- Possess an ability to empathize with fellow human beings.
- Lend a helping hand to those in need.

DOES NOT ...

- Tease or taunt those who are different.
- Seek to judge others, but rather seeks to understand others in terms of our common humanity.
- Seek to draw undue attention to another's shortcomings.

CHAPTER FIVE

ETHICS AND ACHIEVEMENT IN MAINE'S *LEARNING RESULTS*



A person who is FAIR in dealing with others

DOES...

- Seek to strike a balance between the needs and desires of the individual and the needs and desires of the community.
- Understand the distinction between justice and vengeance.
- Treat others the way she or he would like to be treated.

DOES NOT...

- Engage in malicious criticism of others.
- Seek to steal from or cheat others.
- Attempt to further one's own interests or desires at the expense of another.

> *"Treat people like you want to be treated."*
> A Fifth Grade Student

A person who is RESPONSIBLE for personal actions as an individual and a member of the community

DOES...

- Acknowledge making a mistake.
- Accept the consequences of personal actions or failures to act.
- Report harmful or hateful behavior to a trustworthy authority figure.

DOES NOT...

- Evade the just consequences of personal actions.
- Seek to advance one's own interests or desires at the expense of the school or the larger community.
- Rationalize or make excuses for unacceptable behavior.

A person who is COURAGEOUS in the face of ethical challenges

DOES...

- The right thing even if it's not popular.
- Seek the advice and/or assistance of a trustworthy adult when making difficult decisions or when in a dangerous or troublesome situation.
- Hold high aspirations for self and community.

DOES NOT...

- Say, "I cannot", but instead says, "I will try," when faced with difficult challenges.
- Stand idly by while others engage in unethical or harmful behavior.
- Sacrifice aspirations when confronted by academic or ethical setbacks.

> *"...if there is some person getting really beaten up and stuff, help them and tell other people that you shouldn't do this or that."*
> An 8 Year -Old Child

A safe, respectful, and democratic learning environment is much more than a necessary precondition for education. Our focus on ethical and responsible student behavior is not an "add-on" to the school's mission, intended to plug a gap in social structure or social services. Student ethics, attitudes, behavior, and character are essential outcomes of our educational mission, and are indispensable to the achievement of the standards in Maine's *Learning Results*.

Learning Results Guiding Principles

Every student should be...

IV. A Responsible and Involved Citizen Who:

1. **Recognizes the power of personal participation to affect the community and demonstrates participation skills;**
2. **Understands the importance of accepting responsibility for personal decisions and actions;**
3. **Knows the means of achieving personal and community health and well-being; and**
4. **Recognizes and understands the diverse nature of society.**

In 1996, the Maine Legislature adopted the *Learning Results* to establish learning standards for all Maine students educated at public expense. The legislation established the Guiding Principles of the *Learning Results*, describing what every student should know and be able to do upon completion of a public education.The *Learning Results* consists of content standards and performance indicators in eight academic content areas. These standards and indicators are unified by the Guiding Principles, which describe the philosophical and practical essentials of learning and citizenship that are the aggregate outcomes of teaching and learning in the individual disciplines.

The Guiding Principles of Maine's *Learning Results* go beyond academic standards to address the personal capacities our youth will need to thrive in an increasingly complex society and economy. We cannot successfully educate students to be creative and practical problem solvers, responsible and involved citizens, and collaborative and quality workers without teaching the underpinnings of ethics and character.

In a recent survey of over 2,300 employees, "...workers noted sexual harassment, conflicts of interest, employment discrimination, deceptive sales practices, unsafe working conditions and environmental breaches... The study found that nearly 75% of workers believed cynicism, low morale and indifference were to blame for misconduct."

-Sebastian (2000)

In this regard, the *Learning Results* builds on and follows the spirit of Maine's *Common Core of Learning* (1990). The *Common Core* addressed the knowledge, skills, and attitudes students need, and identified Personal and Global Stewardship as one of four unifying categories that cut across individual academic disciplines. In rich language, the *Common Core* defined stewardship to include a capacity to:

- Accept responsibility for personal decisions and actions;
- Demonstrate academic honesty and respond to challenges with courage and integrity;
- Respect the human rights of all people; and
- Understand the ethical dimensions of citizenship, love, friendship, and parenting.

The Common Core of Learning

- **Personal and Global Stewardship**

  "Responsible citizenship requires awareness and a concern for oneself, others, and the environment."

Below the level of Guiding Principles and general concepts, the *Learning Results* content area standards and indicators begin to implicitly define standards of ethical and responsible behavior. Many of the most powerful references can be found in the content areas of Career Preparation, Health and Physical Education, and Social Studies. The specific skills and aptitudes described there reflect responsibility, teamwork, communication, conflict resolution, stress management, community involvement, tolerance and inclusion, and more.

This report serves as a necessary complement to these existing references in *Learning Results*. We certainly support a strong emphasis on critical thinking, decision-making, and conflict resolution skills. However, when viewed in the context of the Guiding Principles, these skills are a means to an end. Students cannot acquire such skills in isolation; the skills must be applied in a coherent fashion as part of putting into action a set of core values. Without addressing values and attitudes, application of these skills cannot successfully be taught.

This report serves two purposes relative to the *Learning Results* document. First, where the *Learning Results* have not yet translated the attitudinal and behavioral outcomes in the Guiding Principles into more specific standards, this report begins to do so. Second, in those areas where the *Learning Results* does already contain specific standards and indicators, our work can serve to focus attention, guide implementation, and help establish a context for the standards and indicators that is connected to the process, practices, and expectations in our communities.

We also seek connections to other recent work that has called upon educators and the public to implement the vision—intrinsic to the *Common Core* and the *Learning Results*—of a school climate responsive to the needs of the whole child. The Commission on Secondary Education's 1998 report, *Promising Futures*, identified a safe, respectful, caring, and democratic environment for learning among important core principles for Maine's high schools.

Promising Futures addresses structural changes that support a meaningful and positive shift in school culture. While *Promising Futures* specifically addresses high schools, our recommendations call for the application of similar principles and practices across all grade levels. We encourage high schools to use our document in tandem with *Promising Futures*, and we invite educators at other grade levels to consider that work as an illustration of the connections between structures, academic achievement, and student behaviors.

ETHICS AND STUDENT BEHAVIOR IN THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF MAINE'S *LEARNING RESULTS:* SELECTED EXAMPLES

III. A Creative and Practical Problem Solver

A. observes situations objectively to clearly and accurately define problems;

B. frames questions and designs data collection and analysis strategies from all disciplines to answer those questions;

C. identifies patterns, trends, and relationships that apply to solutions of problems; and

D. generates a variety of solutions, builds a case for the best response, and critically evaluates the effectiveness of this response.

IMPLICIT VALUES	SKILLS
Tolerance, Open-mindedness, Social Awareness	Conflict Resolution, Critical Thinking, Decision-Making, Appreciation of Diversity, Awareness of Consequences

IV. A Responsible and Involved Citizen

A. recognizes the power of personal participation to affect the community and demonstrates participation skills;

B. understands the importance of accepting responsibility for personal decisions and actions;

C. knows the means of achieving personal and community health and well-being; and

D. recognizes and understands the diverse nature of society.

IMPLICIT VALUES	SKILLS
Responsibility, Reliability, Conscientiousness, Team Work, Dedication, Social Awareness, Respect for Diversity, Tolerance	Community Service, Exposure to Diversity

V. A Collaborative and Quality Worker

A. knows the structure and functions of the labor market;

B. assesses individual interests, aptitudes, skills and values in relation to demands of the workplace; and

C. demonstrates reliability, flexibility, and concern for quality.

IMPLICIT VALUES	SKILLS
Reliability, Tolerance, Conscientiousness, Discipline, Dedication, Self Control, Honesty, Integrity, Self Awareness	Time Management, Development of a Strong Work Ethic, Business Etiquette and Ethics

ETHICS AND STUDENT BEHAVIOR IN THE INDICATORS OF MAINE'S *LEARNING RESULTS*: SELECTED EXAMPLES OF STUDENT OUTCOMES

Career Preparation

Standard A:

- Develop effective ways to interact with others during school and after-school activities. (Grades Pre-K-2)
- Demonstrate workplace behaviors such as punctuality, flexibility, teamwork, and perseverance. (Grades Pre-K-2)
- Demonstrate how positive and negative attitudes affect one's ability to work with others. (Grades 3-4)
- Demonstrate the leadership and membership skills necessary to succeed as a member of a team. (Secondary Grades)

Standard D:

- Exhibit, during the school day, the personal qualities that lead to responsible behavior. (Grades 3-4)
- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of community involvement to family and community life. (Secondary Grades)

Health Education

Standard C:

- Apply coping strategies when they feel too excited, anxious, angry, or out of control. (Grades Pre-K-2)
- Distinguish between healthy and unhealthy stress management techniques. (Grades 5-8)
- Demonstrate strategies to avoid, change, and report unsafe situations. (Secondary Grades)

Standard E:

- Demonstrate refusal and negotiation skills which can enhance health by enabling them to deal with negative peer pressure. (Grades 5-8)
- Demonstrate conflict resolution strategies. (Grades 5-8)
- Demonstrate strategies that can be used to prevent or solve conflicts without harm. (Secondary Grades)

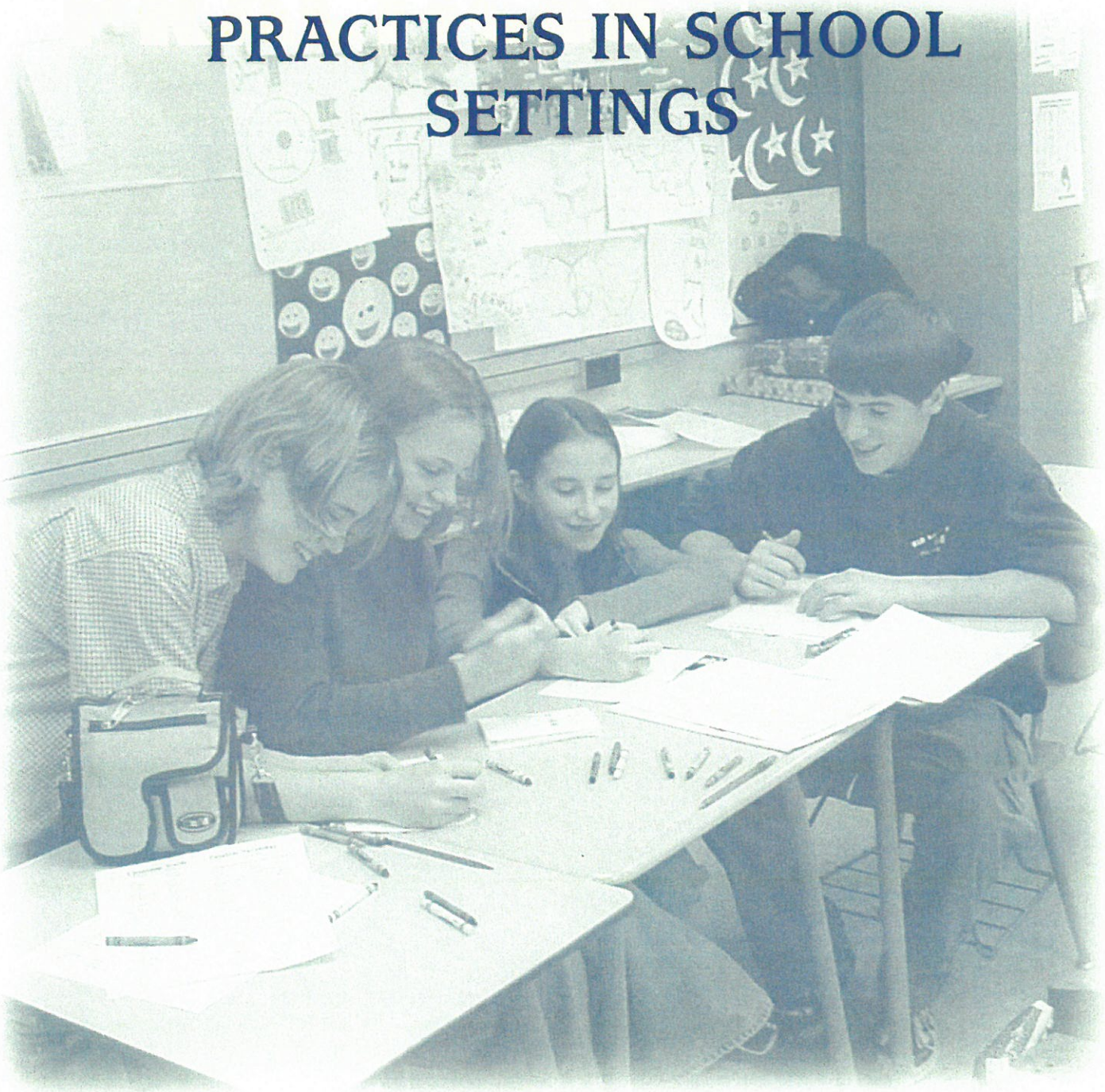
Physical Education

Standard C:

- Describe ways in which respect for individual similarities and differences among people is demonstrated in physical activity settings. (Grades 5-8)
- Participate safely and cooperatively with others to achieve group goals in competitive and cooperative physical activities. (Grades 5-8)

CHAPTER SIX

BEST PRACTICES: A SHOWCASE OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN SCHOOL SETTINGS



The following practices are examples of the Hallmarks described in Chapter 2, and the process described in Chapter 3. By featuring practices that already enjoy successful implementation in school settings, we offer evidence that schools in Maine can achieve the vision outlined in this report. We also hope these examples of concrete practices will give administrators, teachers, parents, and communities practical ideas that may work in their schools and inspire them to engage in the creation of a culture of ethics and responsibility in their own schools and communities.

An Anti-Bullying Strategy

The James H. Bean School in Sidney began a program of bullying prevention two years ago. This K-6 program is part of a comprehensive system of discipline and skill building where adult authority is kept intact while students are encouraged to exercise decision-making skills and treat themselves and their classmates with kindness, respect, and honesty. Building students' self-esteem and decision-making skills is not a rationale for adults to avoid or take a "soft" approach to discipline or intervention. According to Stan Davis, the school's guidance counselor, "The root word for 'discipline' means to teach." At Bean, clear, consistent, and fair consequences are enforced, while the offending student continues to be a valued member of the school community.

Students are also encouraged to intervene when a bullying situation arises. Students are taught to take the following **Anti-Bullying Steps** when they, or a classmate are being bullied:

- **Tell the bully to stop**
- **Tell a teacher**
- **Reach out in friendship**

This and the other strategies utilized at Bean work because all the adults on school grounds, including cooks and custodians, have received training in bullying prevention and are committed to preventing harmful behavior in their school.

Students also are exposed to the anti-bullying message in the curriculum by, for example, reading a book that includes a character experiencing bullying. Students are then given the opportunity to act out such a situation and problem solve.

Adults at Bean are expected to intervene immediately when students are causing either physical or verbal harm to one another. All students caught causing physical or verbal harm must visit the principal's office, where they learn the consequences of their actions. They are also required to reflect meaningfully on their actions by completing a **Think About It Form,** which asks the questions:

- **What have you done?**
- **Why was the behavior wrong?**
- **What problem were you trying to solve?**
- **How will you solve that problem next time without hurting anyone?**

Being dedicated to a comprehensive approach, staff members at Bean go beyond enforcing consequences for unacceptable behavior. They balance the responsibility of maintaining physical and emotional safety with positive reinforcement through their **Caught Ya Practice**. Whenever and wherever an adult or a peer sees a child demonstrating helpfulness, politeness, or kindness, they acknowledge that child by including his or her name in a monthly drawing in which the winner receives a small prize.

Parents are also a critical part of Bean's efforts to create an ethical and responsible school culture. Teachers and parents consistently maintain contact with each other; in some grades, students bring home assignment notebooks with homework assignments which parents check and sign. This notebook is also a place for teachers and parents to share concerns and praise about student's progress and behavior.

Values, Planning, and Conflict Resolution

Principal Suanne Giorgetti has watched the culture at Benton Elementary transform since adopting a values-based, proactive, and skill-building approach to education and discipline. These days, Principal Giorgetti hears on a regular basis from teachers and parents about how nice

it is to come into a school where children consistently demonstrate respect for both adults and each other. This was not always the case. There was a time at Benton when teachers were frustrated and discouraged by increasingly disrespectful behavior.

Principal Giorgetti and her colleagues made a conscious decision to change their approach to dealing with unacceptable behavior. Rather than dealing with individual acts, they took a systematic approach to identifying the values, creating effective interventions and teaching conflict resolution skills on a school-wide basis. The desired outcome of this three-dimensional approach was to create and maintain an orderly, safe, and respectful environment for all.

The first step was to identify values, or ideals that all members of the school community would be expected to uphold. Benton Elementary went through a process similar to the one outlined in Chapter Three to identify the values that make up their code of ethics. These values serve as a foundation for the establishment and enforcement of expectations for student behavior. The **Core Values** identified at Benton were:

- **Responsibility**
- **Respect**
- **Honesty**
- **Cooperation**
- **Tolerance/ Acceptance**
- **Courtesy**
- **Self-Control/ Self-Discipline**
- **Consideration**
- **Dependability**

Acknowledging that there would still be a need to address problematic behaviors and ensure safety on school grounds, the second step was to create a method of intervention that was consistent with these values. The purpose of the intervention is to help students identify problematic behavior and understand the impact of that behavior on self and others, and to develop a plan to avoid a repetition of the situation. To that end, Principal Giorgetti and her colleagues developed and began to utilize what they call a "Planning Sheet". The **"Planning Sheet"** outlines the following intervention guidelines within the context of Benton's Core Values:

- **Intervention occurs immediately. Staff members are available to cover classrooms to allow time for teachers to confer with the student while the situation is current.**
- **Student and teacher work together to identify the incident.**
- **The teacher works to reduce emotional intensity and assists students in developing a reliance on rational words and ideas.**
- **Student and teacher develop a plan, based on the student and the school's values, for how the student will behave the next time a similar situation arises.**
- **Consequences for the current behavior are determined, based on the school's disciplinary guidelines.**
- **The teacher and student conclude the conference with a call to the student's parent to explain the situation and how it has been resolved.**

The next step was to provide students with the skills they needed to apply the values adopted at Benton Elementary and to learn to resolve differences before they become conflicts. To that end, a Conflict Resolution Model was adopted and implemented in every classroom. The **Conflict Resolution Model**, adopted for both teachers and students at Benton, is outlined below:

- **Calmly admit to the conflict and the feelings you have about it.**
- **Plan a meeting, making sure you have the necessary information and thinking carefully about what you would like to discuss.**
- **When you meet, make sure everyone has a turn to speak and make sure you truly listen.**
- **Decide what the problem is and what the source of the problem is.**
- **Look for solutions that can be agreed to, focusing on the present and not the past.**
- **Write down or state the understood agreement and set a time to check on the solution to see if it is working.**

Building Connections

In 1998, Mt. Ararat Middle School turned to the community when it came time to design a new middle school for 900 students. While anticipating and envisioning the physical characteristics of their new school, this community also chose to use this as an opportunity to envision and strengthen the culture of the school.

Principal Bette Manchester, in consultation with Dr. Bruce St. Thomas, began by presenting a guided imagery project that engaged approximately 1000 students from second through eighth grade. As students and staff imagined visiting their future school, drawings were completed to represent their concepts and imaginings. Information was also gathered from interviews of students and staff. The input of students and staff was used as a guide in the design of the new facility.

Moving beyond discussions and plans for the new building, the focus turned to the atmosphere and the deeper values within the larger community. Most striking was the children's capacity to imagine a learning center that focused on a shared community role through caring for animals, children, adults, and seniors within the local towns and neighborhoods.

Building on the momentum of this vision of multigenerational collaboration, Dr. St.Thomas and Principal Manchester worked with Ross Cameron, leadership facilitator at Camp Kieve, and with faculty to take other steps to create this **Vision of Community** with collaboration at all levels. Action steps taken to deepen their vision included:

- **A 2 day workshop involving all staff, including non-instructional personnel (i.e., transportation, kitchen and custodial staff) followed by;**
- **2 days of workshops involving the whole school to identify core values and develop a student-owned code of conduct to carry to the new school;**
- **The establishment of advisor/advisee relationships between students and teachers which serve as a vehicle for culture-building activities, further strengthening those relationships;**
- **The encouragement of adults in the community to mentor students; and**
- **Fostering a desire among students to perform community service.**

"Building Connections" has become the ongoing work and vision for Mt. Ararat Middle School. The desired outcomes of this vision and these action steps are aimed at building meaning into the community by developing:

- **Trust**
- **Safety**
- **A sense of identity**
- **A feeling of ownership**
- **Shared responsibility**
- **Shared celebration**

Values and Teamwork

The four teachers responsible for educating the 60 sophomores (approximately one-third of the sophomore population) on their team at Edward Little High School are having the best experience of their careers. The Secondary Teaming Program at Edward Little High School in Auburn utilizes integrative teaching, service learning and alternative/progressive assessment. This team of teachers and students engages in learning and service activities within the context of values identified by the students.

Each year the incoming sophomore class engages in a process of identifying values, and behavioral indicators for those values. This process is a student–driven and teacher–facilitated activity. For the students, engagement in this process begins with a writing prompt. The team's English teacher asks students to complete the following sentence: "In order to create a safe, healthy and productive learning culture..."

The values identified through this exercise are integrated into all five classes attended by this team: English, Social Studies, Science, Math, and the Team Lab. This year, not only did the sophomore team identify values for their team, but a freshman team has been inspired to do so as well. According to English teacher Brian Flynn, change of this kind is made incrementally and it takes time. Moreover, the "community" may begin in a single grade before it encompasses the entire school culture. The **Core Values** identified by the students on the 1999-2000 sophomore team were:

- **Trustworthiness**
- **The Golden Rule**
- **Respect**
- **Honesty**
- **Love**

According to Flynn, the integration of values into the teaming program has improved students' ability to guide their own behavior with their consciences, rather than having teachers direct student behavior solely through fear of punishment. Students and teachers on the sophomore team take these values very seriously. It is not only teachers who remind students to live up to these values—students also point out to one another and to teachers when their actions are not living up to the standards.

The following are practices utilized by the team members as they continually strive to embrace and act upon their values:

- ***Service Learning—Taking action actually tests values; past teams have undertaken the following:***
  - **Constructed an amphitheater;**
  - **Erected a greenhouse and grew a variety of plant life;**
  - **Created an outdoor classroom;**
  - **Engaged in trail building; and**
  - **Mentored local elementary school children.**
- ***Modeling – Teachers on the team try to consistently model:***
  - **Collaboration and teamwork in lesson planning and delivery;**
  - **Respect for students and colleagues;**
  - **Critical thinking skills;**
  - **Service to the school and the community; and**
  - **Faith in every student's ability to learn.**
- ***Critical Thinking – An overarching emphasis on these skills provides:***
  - **A framework for discussion of ethical issues;**
  - **An effective means of integrating the core values into all disciplines; and**
  - **A mechanism for thoughtful conflict resolution.**
- ***Team Building – All students come together during a team lab period where teachers facilitate and ensure:***
  - **Synthesis, by students, of materials covered in each discipline;**
  - **The building and maintenance of a team ethos;**
  - **That students reflect on the relationships among the courses they are taking within the context of the team's core values; and**
  - **That teachers and students discuss the planning, progress and meaning of their service learning project.**
- ***Evaluation and Recognition – Continuous improvement is ensured through all facets of the Teaming Program, by:***
  - **Students' self-evaluation of their efforts and abilities;**
  - **Constant dialogue between teachers and students regarding students' effort and progress; and**
  - **Teacher and peer recognition of students' attitudinal and academic achievement.**

Democracy in Action

According to former Principal George Marnik, Mt. Desert Island High School is a place where students are significantly involved in meaningful decision-making, and opportunities for genuine leadership. Such involvement means that students share with adults the responsibility of creating a healthy school environment. Facilitating, nurturing and demonstrating ethical and responsible student behavior in our schools requires, by definition, that students be actively involved in the process of creating such a school culture. This is especially true as students progress in their schooling, grow older and more mature, and become increasingly aware of both the rights and responsibilities attendant to their actions as participants in their own academic learning and social development.

Two methods for encouraging and sustaining meaningful student involvement described by Dr. Marnik and implemented at Mt. Desert High School are the:

- **Hearing Committee; and**
- **Student Leadership Organization.**

Instituted in 1975, the Hearing Committee is an elected board, consisting of an equal number of students and adults. The Hearing Committee has addressed a wide variety of very serious infractions of school policy over the past 25 years. Committee meetings are open to the entire school community as aggrieved parties face one another. Student and adult committee members make their recommendations for action directly to the administration.

The Hearing Committee process is taken very seriously by all members of the school and deliberations carry such weight that it is rare that the assistant principal or principal does not adhere to its recommendations. This fact is testimony to the value placed on the trust and mutual responsibility shared by students and adults in working to establish a just and caring school environment. The high degree of respect, shown by adults who actively involve students in decision–making central to student life, helps students at Mt. Desert to better understand the rights and responsibilities of citizenship beyond high school.

The second critical component that helps to shape the student-centered culture at Mt. Desert Island rests in an organization known as Student Leadership. It is a dynamic group of young adults who serve as a positive, proactive student organization. The student leaders are trained in a variety of practices for serving fellow students, the school and the community including:

- **Peer Mediation;**
- **Peer Education;**
- **HIV Education;**
- **Tutoring;**
- **Peer Support; and**
- **School and Community Service.**

Adult advisors work to ensure that the group's membership reflects the diversity of students within the school. Underlying this effort is a belief that leadership can demonstrate itself through many different people. Any student can apply to participate in Student Leadership. Students are selected to serve in this organization based on contributions to the school, potential for leadership, willingness to serve others, and commitment to work toward meeting identified personal and group goals. The inclusive nature and success of this organization is evidenced by the participation, in Student Leadership, of over 10% of the student body each year. Such a broadly defined effort places a significant value on students as the primary constituency of educational efforts.

It is a core belief of the faculty at Mt. Desert that learning has significant ramifications beyond the four years of high school. Issues of personal responsibility, citizenship and community building are as integral to the development of productive and wholesome individuals as is academic success. In the short term, greater student involvement in the life of the school and community means less alienation and fewer destructive behaviors. In the long term, such involvement leads to adults who are better educated, more concerned for others, and more positively and actively a part of their communities.

Restorative Discipline

> "Believe it or not, part of the joy of working with the children in my class is working together with them at issues of discipline. Just about every situation that is a conflict of some sort can be used as a teachable moment in our life together."
>
> -Roxanne Claasen (2000: 4)

Discipline should be implemented in a way that includes opportunities for both students and adults to learn and to teach. Intervention to stop the harm, whether physical or emotional, must come first but it should be quickly followed by efforts to resolve conflict and to refocus attention on the harm to the victim and the community. One approach of this type, known as "restorative discipline", is an offspring of the restorative justice approaches increasingly utilized in the judicial system, particularly in dealing with juvenile offenses. Community resolution teams in several Maine communities are implementing restorative juvenile justice approaches. Tom Ewell of the Maine Council of Churches has studied the restorative approach and seen it applied in schools and other settings.

Restorative discipline demands accountability for behavior, and focuses on the needs of the victim (if any) and of the community, while treating offenders as capable of responsibility and deserving of respect. Some traditional discipline systems focus attention on the offending or misbehaving student, and on the extent of the punitive sanctions to be imposed. Discussions of proportionality or fairness typically are directed at the severity of the punishment, in comparison to the severity of the offense.

In contrast, restorative discipline seeks to shift the focus to the harm done to the victim and the school community. The focus is on the corrective action that should be taken by the offender, and fairness lies in the determination of whether the offender has taken appropriate actions to redress the impact on the victim and/or community.

The key aspects of this type of discipline are:

- **That it be immediate, not something that is pursued a week later but something that happens as soon as safety is assured, while the incident is still fresh;**
- **That it be face to face, not working through intermediaries but with all those who are affected gathering at one time and place;**
- **That its primary focus be on redress of the harm done rather than on the rule that was broken, beginning with the victim (if any) and then with the broader community;**
- **That the offender accepts personal responsibility for his or her actions, both to the victim and to the community; and**
- **That the offending student develop an improved understanding in order to be better able to prevent or correct future behavior.**

The restorative component of a disciplinary system can begin only after an intervention is made to stop inappropriate behavior or language, and only after the offending student has accepted responsibility for his or her behavior.

When misbehavior or conflict occur, the first step must be intervention to stop the harm and protect the victim. After the initial intervention, a restorative component can play an important role, but it must be adapted to the type and circumstances of the offending behavior. In a context where conflicts or problems are multifaceted or mutual (e.g., where peer mediation is appropriate), those involved are called together. This gathering is often called a circle and "calling for a circle" is a request to deal with a behavior or a conflict. In other circumstances, where there is an imbalance of power among those affected (e.g., bullying), the restorative component can only be initiated and managed through the intervention of adult authority.

The success of restorative discipline depends on the ability and willingness of those involved—especially a victim—to help define the damage and to help create a resolution that is perceived as adequate and fair. To be effective, it takes

courage on the part of all involved, to structure a solution on the basis of the consensus of all those who have a stake.

Restorative discipline's strength is its potential for creativity and flexibility in customizing the actions to be taken by the offender. Apologies may be made, or property returned, or some other tangible expression of making things as right as possible may be the restorative outcome. Resolution may call for a progression of steps, each dependent on the success of the last. However, flexibility is never a substitute for accountability; it will always be necessary to implement real resolutions, and to check and evaluate them for effectiveness. There must not only be monitoring and follow-up to ensure that the agreed–upon course of action has been followed, but also penalties for failure to follow through with that resolution.

Restorative discipline is no panacea; it is not appropriate or effective in all circumstances. Schools must have well-thought-out, consistent, reasonable systems of disciplinary interventions and consequences in place as a backdrop and complement to restorative approaches.

Stan Davis, a guidance counselor at Sidney's Bean School with extensive experience in anti-bullying efforts, observes that approaches like restorative discipline are likely to be most effective when the misbehavior is an isolated offense, rather than an incident in a pattern of repeated aggressive behavior or repeated bullying (i.e., the repeated victimization of the same vulnerable individual).

In the case of bullying or repeated aggressive behavior, it is often inappropriate to seat the perpetrator and the victim in the same circle. The victim is often afraid to speak up and fearful that to do so is to invite further victimization. In bullying there is an inherent imbalance of power between the bully and the victim, so intervention by adult authority is needed to redress that balance. Thus, in their use of restorative discipline, schools must not abdicate the responsibility to provide both protection and consistent disciplinary measures. Peer mediation is often an inappropriate substitute for adult authority in bullying situations for the same reason. Adult authority must be exercised to protect the victims of bullies, with clear penalties.

Davis also observes that approaches like restorative discipline may be more effective in situations where blame has been fixed and where the restorative approach is offered to the offender as an alternative to some other, more traditional type of penalty. This traditional penalty would be imposed if the offender fails to live up to the terms of the agreed-upon alternative resolution.

The discussions, listening, and student reflections involved in the restorative approach, as well as the customizing of redress to the harm done in the particular situation, take more time and energy than simply banishing students from the room or the school. The corresponding benefit is that the solutions developed are likely to be more concrete, appropriate, fair—and perceived as fair, and effective, thereby reducing the likelihood of the problem recurring.

Regardless of the method by which disciplinary consequences are imposed, the "consequences imposed should still be tested by whether they are reasonable, related, restorative and respectful." (Ron Claasen 2000: 3)

CHAPTER SEVEN

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS



Everyone Taking Responsibility

This report urges schools and communities to overtly address issues of character and values; outlines a vision for an ethical and responsible school culture; sets standards for student behavior; provides a process for communities to do the same; clearly links standards for ethical and responsible student behavior with the academic standards set forth in *Learning Results*; and shares exemplary practices from Maine schools that are on their way to achieving this vision. This report is not just about teachers, or students, or parents. Rather, it is about community and people in a variety of roles working together to improve the culture in Maine schools. If you are still wondering, "What can I do?", and "What are my responsibilities?", here are just a few of the actions that each of us as individuals can take in our varied roles in our communities:

School Boards

- Facilitate community awareness and discussion on the topic of values and character, through scheduled discussions at school board meetings.
- Model community values in all interactions with constituents by applying a democratic and inclusive approach to all discussions.
- Authorize teachers to teach community values and model ethical and responsible behavior through the inclusion of ethics in the curriculum and through support of staff with time and resources necessary to integrate this teaching.
- Evaluate discipline policies and make recommendations to ensure both that interventions exist to stop negative behaviors and protect the safety of students, and that an educational or restorative component connects discipline to values, accountability, and prevention.
- Assist in the assessment of needs and outcomes by including strategic planning in the school board agenda.
- Support schools' efforts by developing partnerships with citizen groups and business owners in the community.

Administrators

- Adopt a leadership role in the discussion and identification of community values and standards of behavior.
- Serve as the primary liaison among all other stakeholders (i.e., school board, teachers, parents and community).
- Create and support student councils that are not merely tokens, but an integral and respected part of the school's decision-making process.
- Support teachers and staff in their teaching of community values and modeling ethical and responsible behavior by making a strong personal and professional commitment to these values and standards.
- Work as advocates to provide the time and resources for meaningful professional development in the area of values/character education.
- Work with teachers and staff to ensure that community values are fully integrated throughout the school curriculum and culture and not presented as an additional element.
- Promote meaningful recognition of teachers, staff, and students who exemplify community values and standards of ethical and responsible behavior.
- Develop partnerships with preschools, childcare providers, child advocacy groups, and pediatricians to ensure that parents recognize the significance of their role in fostering values and standards of ethical and responsible behavior during early childhood.
- Develop and maintain partnerships with citizen groups, non-profit organizations, and business owners as resources for mentoring and service learning programs.
- Implement and enforce discipline policies both to intervene to stop negative behavior and protect the safety of students, and to use an educational or restorative component to connect discipline to values, accountability, and prevention.
- Perform needs assessment, identify desired outcomes, gather pertinent baseline data, and ensure continual, multi-dimensional evaluation of efforts to create and sustain an ethical and responsible school culture.

Teachers and Staff

- Become a committed participant in the discussion and identification of community values and standards of behavior.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues, parents and students to develop and reinforce the use of a common language for identifying community values.
- Model community values in all interactions with students, parents, fellow teachers, and other school staff, and expect the same in return.
- Use an integrative approach to teaching community values and standards for ethical and responsible behavior.
- Provide students with meaningful opportunities to apply values and standards for ethical and responsible behavior—both inside and outside of the classroom.
- Recognize students who exemplify community values and standards of ethical and responsible behavior.
- Honor, inform and involve parents in their critical role in fostering ethical and responsible behavior in their children.
- Ensure the consistent and equitable application of discipline policies everywhere in the school environment.
- Assist in needs assessment, identifying desired outcomes, gathering pertinent baseline data, and ensuring continual, multi-dimensional evaluation of efforts to create and sustain an ethical and responsible school culture.

Students

- Become a committed participant in the discussion and identification of community values and standards of behavior.
- Keep parents informed of whereabouts, activities, frustrations, and goals.
- Seek knowledge and advice from admirable adults in the family, school and community.
- Offer recognition and praise to peers, teachers, relatives, friends, and other community members who exemplify and uphold community values and standards for behavior.
- Recognize and act upon the opportunity to be a positive role model to others of all ages, and to intervene as a model when appropriate.
- Take opportunities to lead not just academically or athletically, but ethically as well.
- Identify and act upon ways to serve the school and the community.
- Accept the consequences of personal actions, especially if restoration for a victim or the community is necessary.

➤ *Parents*

- Become a committed participant in the discussion and identification of community values and standards of behavior.
- Model community values and standards of behavior in the home.
- Clearly communicate expectations and values to all children.
- Do not make excuses for anyone's unacceptable behavior.
- Enforce consistent consequences for behavior that violates household rules.
- Listen to children and other family members when they want or need to talk.
- Maintain involvement in and awareness of the activities of family members, especially those of children.
- Praise children and other family members, not only for achievement, but also for ethical and responsible behavior.

➤ *Other Community Members*

- Become a committed participant in the discussion and identification of community values and standards of behavior.
- Strive to model community core values and standards for behavior in personal and professional life.
- Consider serving as a mentor to students or volunteering time and expertise to a school.
- Offer recognition and praise to students, teachers, and other community members who exemplify and uphold community values and standards of behavior.
- Offer and promote opportunities for students to serve the community.

Changing Policy to Meet the Challenge

Education leaders and policy makers have a role to play; they also must take responsibility. Policies, programs, and resources must be coordinated to further and support the outcomes described in this report. Leaders and policymakers should:

- **Use the legislative mandate for codes of conduct, and this report to spark extensive dialogue and real reforms in every community.**
  - Model the intended outreach at the state level by involving traditional groups of educators, but go further to draw in and build on the central roles of parents, businesses, clergy, municipal officials, and other community-based (not just school-based) leadership.
- **Persist in and expand efforts to change the structures of schools to reflect a more democratic culture that is responsive to individualized learning needs.**
  - Build on and expand the commendable work of the secondary education reform efforts tied to the recommendations of *Promising Futures*.
  - Expand the focus on democratic structures and individualized learning plans throughout elementary, middle, and secondary schools.
- **Partner with existing programs and initiatives that address school climate, violence prevention, intervention, and asset-building, to support the development of the whole child.**
  - Use and build on existing efforts such as the Maine Project Against Bullying, conflict resolution, Civil Rights Teams, Communities for Children/Communities of Promise, coordinated school health, mentoring, aspirations, restorative justice and service learning.
  - Embed each program at the school level within the context of shared values and an ethical and responsible school culture.
- **Support training and development which equips all school staff to take action to support an ethical school culture.**
  - Help provide the time, resources, and opportunities for staff to be good practitioners of behavioral intervention and to develop the ethical dimension of the curriculum.
  - Include non-teaching staff as critical sources of modeling and intervention.
- **Establish outcome indicators and model assessment tools that schools can use to measure progress and test effectiveness.**
  - Create or coordinate existing assessments across the several dimensions of student behavior and school climate, including measures of behavior, attitudes, perceptions, participation, and achievement of desired outcomes.

Conclusion

In our process and in this report, we have sought to honor the attributes and the values that we have identified here. We have endeavored to be respectful in listening to the voices of our students and educators; honest in describing the challenges we face; compassionate in supporting our students and schools to succeed; fair in holding expectations high for all of us, adults and students alike; responsible in advancing solutions that are systemic and long-term instead of simplistic and short-term; and courageous in tackling this subject with resolve. We make no claim to perfection; we have not always honored these values as fully as we would have liked. We can claim only to know the struggle.

Issues of ethics and behavior seem complex and daunting. Where do we begin? Can we achieve the ends we describe as right and good?

We know Maine communities can succeed in crafting thoughtful, consistent, coordinated efforts that will positively address behaviors and attitudes. We know because some Maine communities are already seeing success. These efforts will take time, commitment, resources, and hard work. It is the nature of education in a changing society that the work will never be done. But working together as a community, we can change our schools and communities into better places to live, learn, and work.

In the end, our work is only as good as the understanding, commitment, and energy that educators, students, and citizens around the State bring to the use of this report, and your willingness to take action upon it. We wish you courage in this endeavor.

> "We become just by the practice of just action, self-controlled by exercising self-control, and courageous by performing acts of courage."
>
> -Aristotle

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