

Selected Research Findings Cited in the *Smart & Good High Schools Report* by Thomas Lickona and Matthew Davidson (2005) (for complete citations see the report, www.cortland.edu/character/highschool)

The Ethical Learning Community (Chapter 3)

1. Small learning communities. Students in small learning communities tend to achieve at higher levels, both on standardized tests and other measures; experience a greater sense of attachment to their schools; are more likely to attend and graduate; and are less likely to engage in negative social behaviors. (p. 34)

2. Connectedness. Students who feel close to family members and students who feel close to people at school are less likely to engage in health risk behaviors. (p. 34)

3. Honor codes. Both college students and high school students are less likely to cheat if their school has an honor code. (p. 37)

4. Parental involvement. The most academically motivated and socially responsible teens are those who enjoy warm and involved relationships with their parents and whose parents monitor their activities in age-appropriate ways. (p. 41) The more often children have dinner with their parents, the less likely youth are to smoke, drink, or use illegal drugs. (p. 41)

5. Student voice. Students who have opportunities for democratic participation in their schools are, during school years, more likely than comparison groups to use higher-stage moral reasoning; after graduation, they are more likely to show interest in national affairs, vote in elections, and work with others to solve community problems. Teachers who involve students in classroom decision-making experience up to a 40% reduction in discipline referrals. (p. 43)

6. Community agreement about values. A community's degree of value consensus is a stronger predictor of healthy adolescent development than affluence or ethnicity. (p. 53)

7. Positive peer culture. Positive peer-group norms, especially when combined with instruction in perspective-taking and communication skills, have been effective in reducing negative social behavior, even in youths with a history of anti-social conduct. (p. 54)

The Professional Ethical Learning Community (Chapter 4)

8. Students' view of "caring" teachers. Students see teachers as caring when they respect students and teach well. (p. 62)

9. Collegiality. Higher levels of teacher collegiality are associated with higher levels of student learning. (p. 67)

10. Critical Friends Groups. Teachers who participate in Critical Friends Groups that meet regularly to share student work and critique each other's pedagogy are more likely to have high expectations for students and to feel they are improving every year as teachers. (p. 79)

Fostering the 8 Strengths of Character (Ch. 5)

Outcome 1: Lifelong Learner and Critical Thinker

11. Student engagement. "Engaging schools" produce higher levels of learning whether in urban, suburban, or rural communities. Engaging schools are ones which promote a sense of belonging, make the curriculum relevant to students' lives, and provide both challenging instruction and support for meeting high standards. (p. 88)

12. Structured controversy. Having students study and debate controversial issues in small cooperative groups is more effective than traditional debate formats in developing perspective-taking and retention of subject matter. (p. 93)

13. Media literacy. Teaching students to think critically about media messages has been effective in reducing risk behaviors such as alcohol, steroid, and illegal drug use. (p. 98)

Outcome 2: Diligent and Capable Performer

14. The importance of effort. Students who view achievement as something they earn through hard work, and not primarily the result of innate abilities, do better in school than students who do not view effort as important. (p. 102)

15. Mastery learning. Requiring students to revise their work to meet a minimum standard has positive effects on student achievement. (p. 105)

16. Study skills. Teaching students study skills improves academic performance. (p. 106)

17. Rubrics. Having students use rubrics to assess their effort and achievement leads to improved academic performance. (p. 109)

18. Co-curricular programs. Students who participate in co-curricular programs, compared to those who don't, get higher grades, use drugs and alcohol less often, and act more ethically. (p. 113)

▪ **Outcome 3: Socially and Emotionally Skilled Person**

19. Social-emotional maturity and achievement.

Intellectually gifted students who fulfill their intellectual promise, compared to equally gifted youth who do not fulfill their promise, are emotionally stable, self-confident, and persistently motivated. (p. 117)

20. Sense of community. The stronger the schoolwide and classroom sense of community, the greater students' empathy, liking for school, motivation to be helpful, and conflict resolution skills. (p. 119)

21. The importance of attitude. A positive student attitude, measured by "hope" in one's ability to overcome a bad grade, predicts student achievement. (p. 121)

▪ **Outcome 4: Ethical Thinker**

22. Moral identity. The extent to which persons are defined by their moral commitments predicts their sense of obligation to help and share. (p. 129)

23. Lives of moral commitment. Moral exemplars are characterized by a sustained commitment to moral ideals and a willingness to sacrifice self-interest. (p. 134)

24. Moral reasoning. When students participate in guided moral dilemma discussions, they show accelerated development of moral reasoning. (p. 141)

▪ **Outcome 5: Respectful and Responsible Moral Agent**

25. Rescuers. Holocaust rescuers were characterized by a strong sense of moral agency—a feeling of responsibility for the welfare of others outside their own social circle. (p. 149)

26. Discipline. Discipline practices that develop moral understanding, social skills, and self-discipline are more effective in promoting personal and social responsibility than methods that rely on external controls alone. (p. 152)

27. The power of the curriculum. Students who took a social studies/history curriculum designed to foster moral agency through the study of bystander intervention during persecutions showed gains in moral reasoning, decreased fighting, and reduced racist attitudes. (p. 157)

▪ **Outcome 6: Self-Disciplined Person**

28. Self-discipline and academic achievement. Childhood self-control is a stronger predictor of teen SAT scores than IQ. (p. 159)

29. Advisories. Following one school's implementation of a freshman advisory program, the percent of freshman failing at least one first-semester course significantly declined. (p. 162)

30. Physical fitness and achievement. Students who met physical fitness standards were superior to less fit students in math and reading. (p. 164)

31. Abstinence. Students who participate in an abstinence program that builds a strong identity and supportive peer culture are significantly less likely to have sex. (p. 168)

32. Developmental assets. Youth who possess more than 30 or 40 "developmental assets" are more likely than low-asset peers to get As in school, help others, and be leaders in groups. (p. 174)

33. Alcohol abuse. Forty percent of youth who use alcohol by age 15 become alcoholics at some point in their lives. (p. 174)

▪ **Outcome 7: Contributing Community Member and Democratic Citizen**

34. Civic participation. Young people who are involved in civic affairs have better work ethics as adults and are more likely to vote. (p. 178)

35. Service learning. Students who engage in service learning are more likely to treat each other kindly, do well on state-mandated tests, and graduate from school. (p. 183)

▪ **Outcome 8: Spiritual Person Engaged in Crafting a Life of Noble Purpose**

36. Authentic happiness. Cross-cultural research finds three life goals to be sources of authentic happiness: maturity of character; loving relationships; and contributing to society. (p. 203)

37. Life goals. Students who learned to set and pursue goals while in high school went on to achieve higher levels of success than equally talented students who did not learn to set goals. (p. 203)