

A Model of the Caring Culture

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By

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EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

College of Education

- One of the largest providers of educational personnel in U.S.
- 1 out of every 4 teachers in Michigan has at least 1 degree from EMU
- 1% of the national educational workforce has a degree from EMU
- First doctoral program at EMU now 100+ grads
- Charter member of NCATE, for 55 years

continued...

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

College of Education

- 26 Milkin Award winners
- Largest department of special education in U.S.
- First special education professional preparation program west of the Alleghenies, and the only one in Michigan that certifies in each specialty area
- Only university in Michigan providing professional preparation in all areas of disability

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Accreditations include:

- ACEI
- ASHA
- CACREP
- CEC
- CED
- CTE
- ELCC
- IRA
- ISTE
- ITEA
- NAEYC
- NASM
- NCATE
- NCTE
- NCTM
- NMSA

Avoidance Schooling

PARENTS: Self-effaced, minimizing their potential role in the education of their son(s)

PRINCIPAL: Placed high energy on school mgmt & little attention to instructional leadership

COUNSELORS: Believed students & parents should make academic program decisions

TEACHERS: Viewed largely as non-caring, non-engaged

African American males controlled much of their academic programs, selecting courses based upon the minimum graduation requirements

PEERS: Peer pressure served as a powerful negative force

African American males most often made dead-end course choices that neither prepared them for work or higher education

Impact of Avoidance Schooling

Less than 15% of the African American males selected higher level courses in math, science, and English



The overall school climate emerged as non-academic and non-challenging for African American males and all students



Increased school suspensions & expulsions for African American males

High in-school and out-of-school truancy

Increased school violence, acting-out

High drop-out & push-out rates

The Caring Framework

TALKING POINTS

“Research has shown that caring in an educational context can enhance students’ academic performance, social skills, and capacity to better recognize their own aptitudes and talents”

[Beck, 1994, 2004; Lyman, 2000; Marshall, Patterson, Rogers, & Steele, 1996; Mayeroff, 1990; Noblit, 1995; Noddings, 1992, 1995, 2002, 2003]

The Caring Framework

TALKING POINTS

Beck (2004) contends that two purposes or goals are basic to any caring action:

- Promoting human development
- Responding to needs

[Drawing upon the work of Mayeroff (1990) and Gaylin (1976).]

The Caring Framework

TALKING POINTS

Gilligan (1982) emphasizes that those who care recognize that they have a “moral imperative—a responsibility to discern the ‘real and recognizable trouble’ of this world” and “to act to alleviate suffering caused by that trouble” (p. 8).

The Caring Framework

TALKING POINTS

As Mayeroff (1990) contends, the teacher's interest should be focused on the student rather than on himself or herself; only by focusing on the student is the teacher able to be responsive to the student's needs and development.

The Caring Framework

TALKING POINTS

Given that caring affects learning and every other aspect of school life, Lyman (2000) posits that a school leadership model that has caring as its basis should be a requirement.

The Caring Framework

TALKING POINTS

“Caring is a value that is grounded in the kinds of relationships that good teachers have cultivated for years”

[Chaskin & Mendley Rauner]

*A Model
of the
Caring Culture*

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In the Nation...

There were 10,900 public alternative schools and programs for 612,900 at-risk students

[U.S. Department of Education, 2002]

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Alternative Schools...

- 25% have a minority student population
- More than 50% are male and African American

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Case Study school selected because it:

- Serves a high number of at-risk African American students
- Operates with unique philosophies and goals
- Meets with unprecedented success

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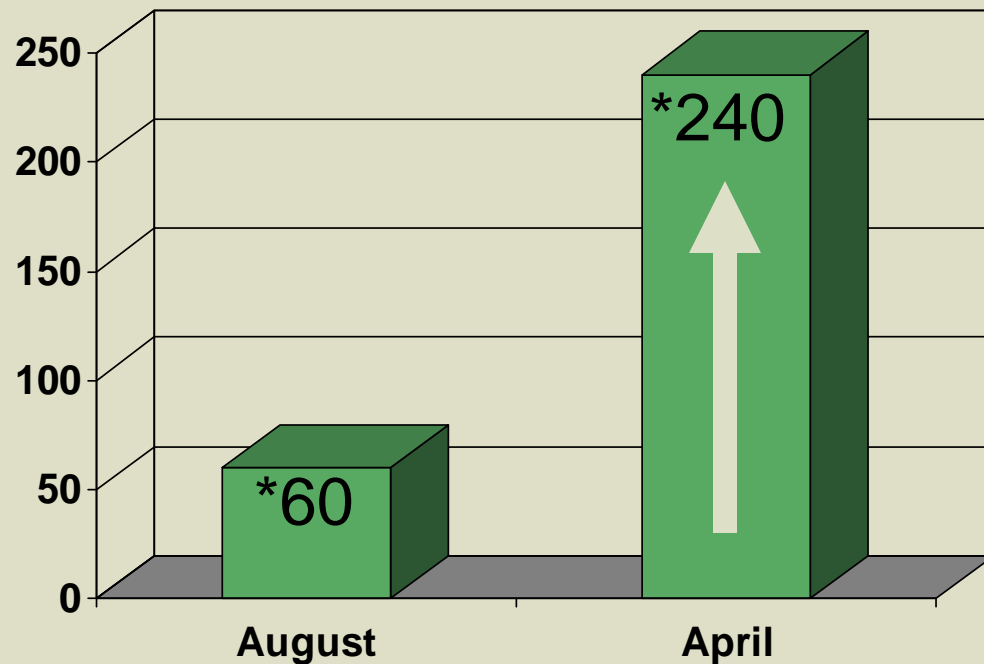
Southern County Middle School (*pseudonym*)

- Exemplary alternative school program
- Successfully serves student population
- Located in NE quadrant of U.S. county public school system
- Specializes in working with troubled middle-school students

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Southern County Middle School (pseudonym)

**Annual
Enrollment**



(*Annual approximations)

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Reasons students are removed from mainstream schools *(in order of frequency)*

1. Teacher harassment or intimidation of staff
2. General threatening behaviors
3. Assault on students
4. Failure to adhere to school rules
5. Multiple suspensions
6. Possession of a weapon
7. Possession or use of drugs or illegal substances
8. Vandalism
9. Bomb threats

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Leadership Team

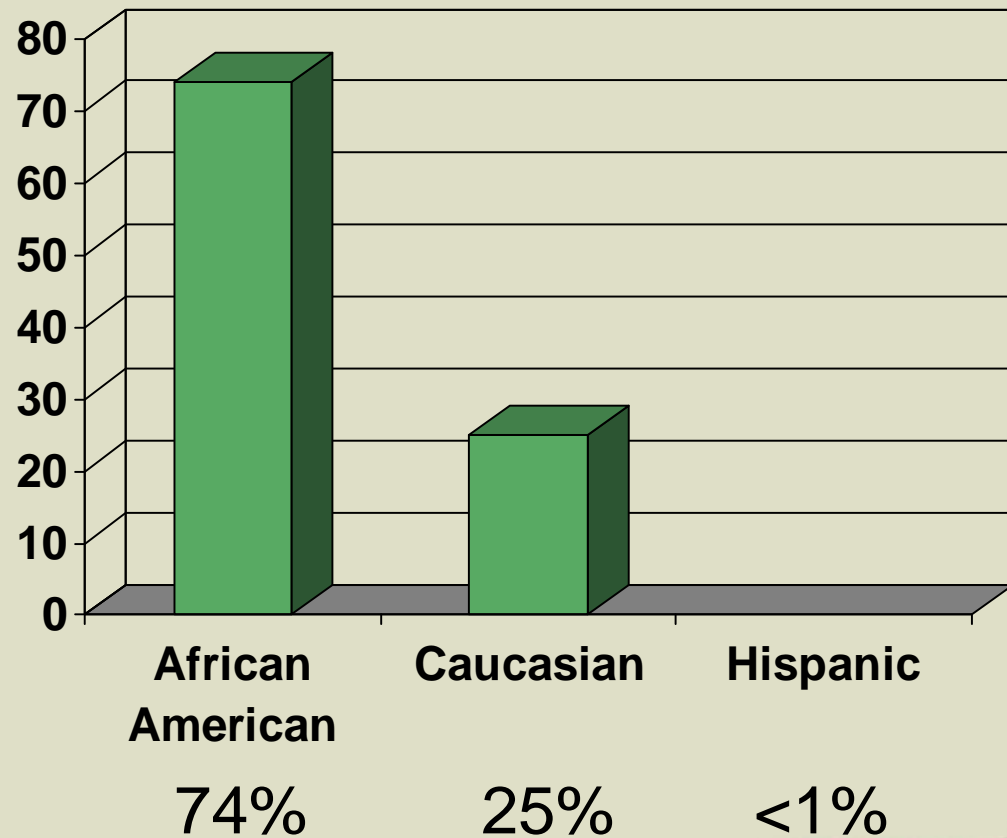
Decides when students are released and returned to mainstream schools

- Principal
- School counselor
- Specific grade-level team leaders

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Demographics of Student Population

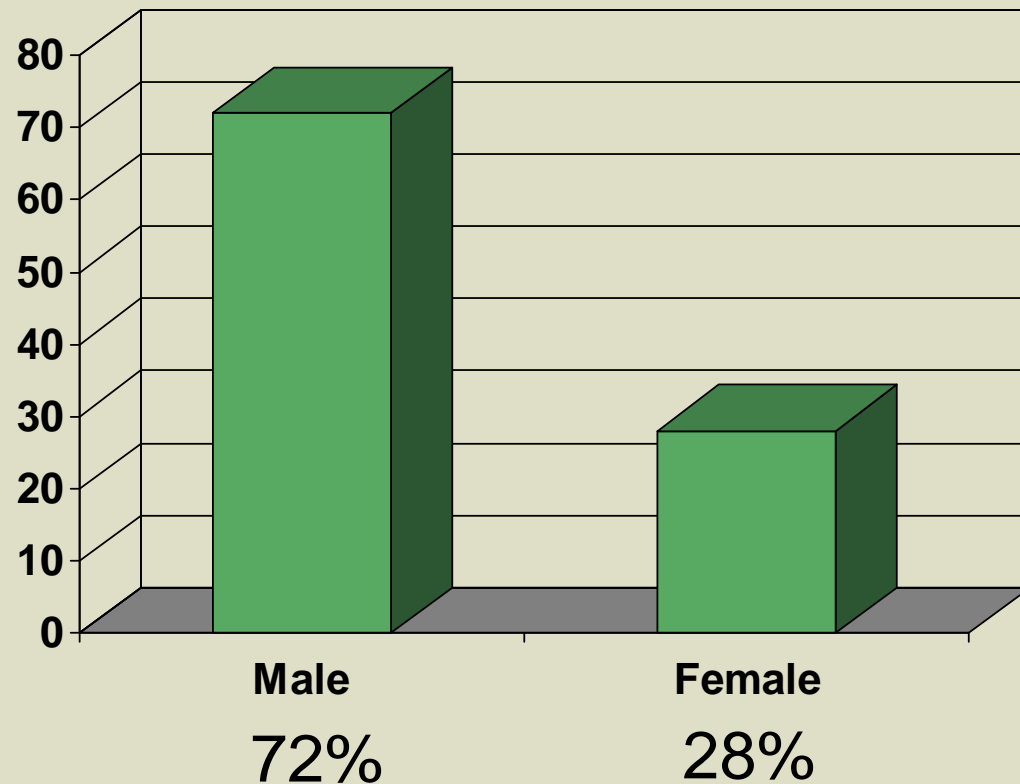
Percent based on
a total population
of 240



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Demographics of Student Population

Percent based on
a total population
of 240



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Demographics of Student Population

21% need special education services,
including:

- Learning disabilities
- Emotional behavior disorders
- Mild mental disabilities

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96% eligible to receive free lunches

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School's Philosophy / Ideals

- All students can learn through a behavior management and reward system
- Cohesive teacher and staff belief system is school's mission
- Keeping small, more manageable class sizes

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Methods of Rehabilitation

- Meeting individual needs
- Role modeling
- Repetitive verbal affirmation of behavior
- Helping students understand personal accountability for behavior, academic success and social interactions

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Procedures

- Case study conducted for 1 year (2000)
- Traditional qualitative research strategies
- 26 semi-structured 45-90 minute interviews with school staff
- Timed observations in and around classrooms
- Principal shadowed for 3 full days
- Document analysis

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Caring Framework in an educational context can:

- Create enhanced academic learning
- Improved social abilities
- Help students to recognize their own aptitudes and talents

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Caring Framework

However, caring as a psychological construct cannot easily be identified.

Many people have different perceptions of what it means to care, to be caring and/or to demonstrate caring behavior.

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Caring – Ethic & Action

Promoting human development

- Way of helping others grow, caring actions are teleological

Responding to needs

- Those who care have a “moral imperative”...act to alleviate suffering

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Caring – Commitment

Communal relationships mean the welfare of each is linked to the welfare of others.

The one caring for others cares for her or himself.

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Caring in an Educational Context

Can ensure the social and academic success of marginalized students.

However, teachers need to focus on student rather than on him/herself.

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Caring in an Educational Context

Teachers need to create caring relationships as care-givers to students

Teachers also need to help develop the capacity for students to care

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What Makes a Good Teacher?

Per Students:

- Firmness
- Compassion
- Engaging style of teaching

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The Best Teachers

- Respect students
- Inspire students to work hard
- Make learning interesting and relevant

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Caring Culture

Administrators must construct a culture and community that supports genuine compassion

The school operation must be based foundationally on:

- Cooperation
- Shared relationships
- Effective communication
- An entire school community that takes caring seriously

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Caring as Career

An ethic of caring can provide administrators with a valuable perspective to guide moral reasoning and decision-making... as an overarching ethical framework to guide administrative decisions

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Caring as Career

“The heart of leadership lies in the hearts of leaders.”

[Bolman and Deal, 1995]

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Findings:

1. Construction of the Caring School Environment
2. Tacit Knowledge of Individual's Needs
3. Caring Actions
4. Met Needs

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1. Construction of the Caring School Climate



Sense of Community and Family	Communicate and Involve Parents or Guardians	Safety for All	Develop Personal Relationships	Build a Sense of Trust
Shared Decision Making	Model Authentic Caring for All	High Expectations and Standards	Verbal Affirmations of Support	Awareness of Individual Needs of All

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1. Construction of the Caring School Climate

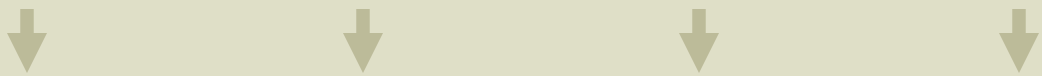
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2. Tacit Knowledge of Individual's Needs

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Perception of the Individual	Cultural Awareness	Personal Ethics	High Expectations
Justice vs. Compassion	Genuine Concern	School Mission and Identity	Professional Standards

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2. Tacit Knowledge of Individual's Needs

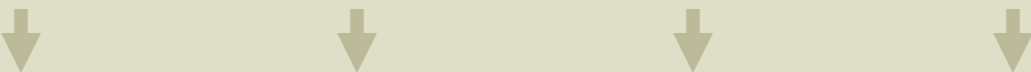
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3. Caring Actions

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3. Caring Actions



Trust and Respect	Physiological Needs	Gained Hope	Self-Esteem Building
Safety and Security	Academic Deficiencies	Power	Love and Belonging

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3. Caring Actions

Trust and Respect	Physiological Needs	Gained Hope	Self-Esteem Building
Safety and Security	Academic Deficiencies	Power	Love and Belonging



4. Met Needs

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4. Met Needs



Actualization of Holistic Human Growth and
Development of At-Risk Students

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4. Met Needs



Actualization of Holistic Human Growth and
Development of At-Risk Students



Return to Mainstream	Improved Behavior	Relation- ships	Academic Abilities	Moral Reasoning	Literacy	Social Abilities
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Positive Outcomes

- More than 65% of the students were able to successfully return to mainstream schools, maintain productive interactions and complete the academic year
- Students often preferred the learning environment of the alternative school

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Positive Outcomes

- African American students have and exercise their agency within the educational environment
- They demonstrated their ability to respond favorably to a caring ethos, improve social behaviors and show interest in learning