



Sumner County Schools News

Committed and Focused on Growing Learners

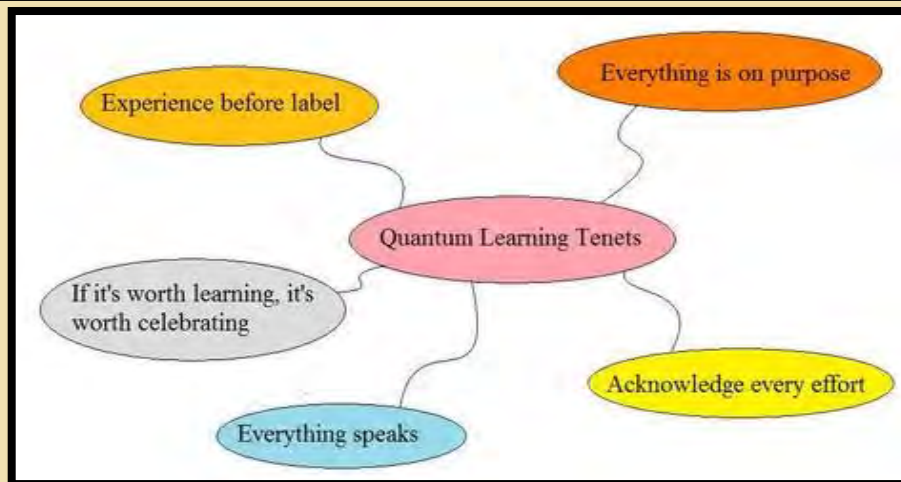
School Year 2017-18, October Issue

Quantum

Learning's

Five

Tenets



Quantum Learning Education (QL) is built on principles of the Eight Keys of Excellence as well as the guiding Five Tenets¹ that provide teachers and students with a direct focus for learning. The tenets are:

1. **Everything Speaks**-Everything, such as classroom surroundings, tone of voice, a morning greeting, or distribution of materials, sends a message about learning. Being deliberate and proactive in sending and receiving these messages create an optimal classroom environment.
2. **Everything is On Purpose**-Everything done in a classroom has an intended purpose. Being purposeful encourages a greater awareness of all variables that influence learning. This tenet is a reminder that classrooms are a place to orchestrate learning rather than dispense knowledge.
3. **Experience Before Label**-Learning happens best when students experience the information in some aspect (creating or connecting to prior schema) before they acquire the labels for what was learned. Here, the word "label" refers to the information to be learned – the facts, the formulas, the new terms, the reasons, etc. The tenet is about creating a teachable moment, getting students involved, and generating questions such as Why, When, Where, What, or How.
4. **Acknowledge Every Effort**-Learning involves risk-taking. Acknowledgment of each step encourages learning. The tenet also promotes self-efficacy in students. Self-efficacy is a student's concept of his or her own abilities and what he or she is capable of accomplishing. Effort is a choice. Therefore, if effort is the sign of a good student, then even though a student's grades may not be stellar, he or she would still be considered a good student due to making the choice to give a solid, consistent effort to learning.
5. **If It's Worth Learning, It's Worth Celebrating**-Celebration provides feedback regarding progress and increases positive, emotional associations with learning. It is the good feeling students have about their own progress and their contributions to the learning of others. It includes joy, excitement, and passion for learning that permeates the classroom atmosphere. Celebration reinforces motivation and the message, "This is important."

¹http://www.quantumlearning.com/blog/the_quantum_learning_tenets.aspx



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SCS News District Editor Selena Elmore

This is It, Sumner County Middle College High!

On August 7, **Sumner County Middle College High School (SCMCHS)** began the 2017-18 school year on Volunteer State Community College (VSCC) campus. This year, SCMCHS has 56 students, comprised of juniors and seniors from all Sumner County Schools high schools. VSCC classes did not begin until August 28, so principals Betsy Hunter and Brad Schreiner spent two weeks teaching students how to be successful in college.

Mini-lessons were created and centered on time management, college schedules, degree paths, plagiarism, syllabus importance, campus safety, college technology, and distractions. SCMCHS students listened to a variety of speakers including former students and current VSCC instructors. The students spent time becoming familiar with VSCC campus and participated in a variety of team building exercises to blend the 40 new students with the 16 returning students.

SCMCHS students were well prepared for the first day of classes. In fact, they were so well prepared they assisted many other VSCC students with their schedules and building locations! These students take ownership of the middle college opportunity and realize the Key of Excellence “This is It!” Showing a belief in excellence, they make the most of every moment and model a positive attitude while doing it.

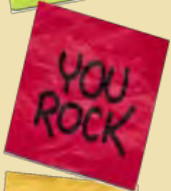


White House High Embraces Servitude and Recognition for Students



This year, **White House High School (WHHS)** and its student leadership team is focused on leading the school by example by serving peers, teachers, support staff, and the White House community. To focus on needs of others, students have created an action plan that involves schoolwide events to develop unity, allow random acts of kindness, and provide more student recognition.

Serving Others in the Community: WHHS and HB Williams Elementary have partnered to provide leadership students with opportunities to serve. WHHS students will mentor and help kindergarten and first grade students read sight words and practice the alphabet.



To assist middle school students in preparation for the transition to high school, student leaders at WHHS organize and lead welcome tours of eighth grade students in the spring. In addition, WHHS has each registered student sign a graduation gown or class t-shirt.

Serving and Recognizing Students: Several ways that students are focused on supporting peers is by encouraging random acts of kindness throughout WHHS. During Blue Devil Pride time, leadership students visit classrooms and hand out treat bags with encouraging messages. The bags are given to students selected for a variety of positive reasons. The student might have an improved grade, exhibit a Key of Excellence trait such as Integrity, or do something to lift the spirits of another student.

Rewarding Student Success: Students' academic success is being encouraged by honoring students quarterly for making the honor roll and improving grades.



Building Unity and Inspiring Greatness: To encourage students, teachers, and staff members to fight through obstacles, challenge themselves, and reach beyond their expectations, WHHS is welcoming a motivational speaker, Matt Bennett, to share his story and inspire the WHHS community on November 2.



Amy Howell—Gallatin High’s Queen of Quantum Learning

Amy Howell, CTE health science teacher at **Gallatin High School (GHS)**, enthusiastically employs the principles of Quantum Learning in the classroom daily. To set the tone for the day and get the "home-court advantage," Mrs. Howell stands outside the classroom door every block and plays music as students enter. Sometimes, there are even bubbles involved! Not only does this provide an individualized greeting for each student, but it lightens the mood for students and everyone who walks by Mrs. Howell’s end of the hallway.

There are many other instructional strategies that Mrs. Howell uses to encourage movement and fun in the learning environment. She says, "It is important to get the blood flow from their bottoms to their brains." For example, she has students share a joke of the day. They also do mind-mapping, which is a technique that gets the GHS students out of their seats to demonstrate what they've learned and how various lessons connect. Mrs. Howell utilizes energizers, such as volunteering a drummer in the band to use his chops, to establish a lively learning atmosphere. The list of instructional techniques and state moves she uses is exhaustive. The end result is classes have an engaging and fun time learning!

Mrs. Howell also teaches Quantum Learning Education. If you have any questions or interests, you may contact her at carolyn.howell@sumnerschools.org.

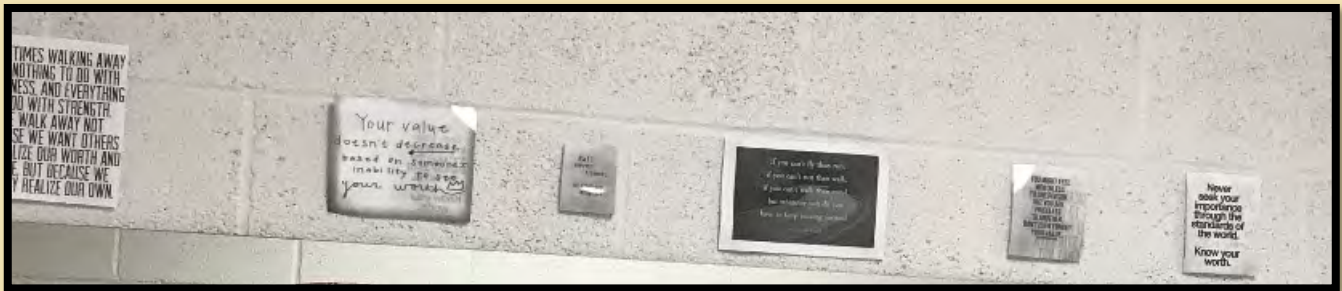


Mrs. Howell
conducting a “Dr.
Phil” forum in
GHS Health
Science class.

EB Wilson Virtual High . . . Striving for Excellence

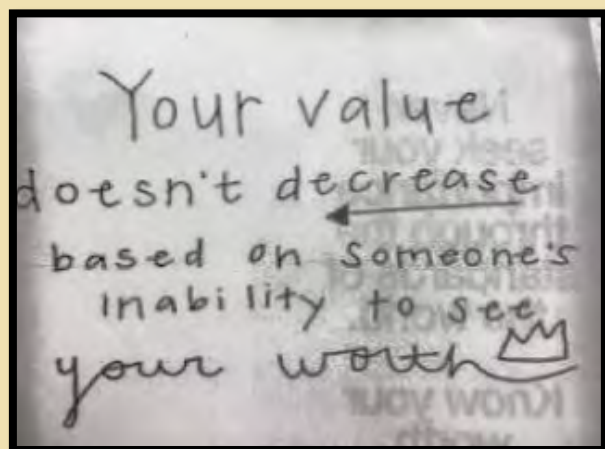
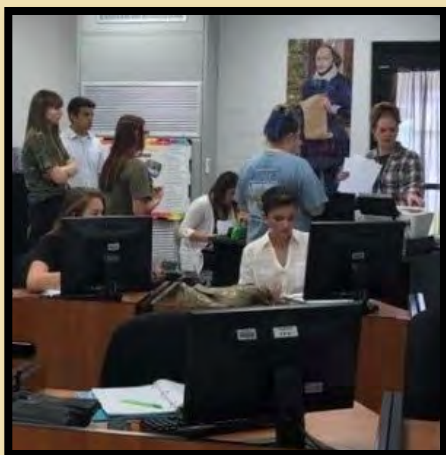
Building character in students through the Eight Keys of Excellence helps young people realize their greatness and enables schools to achieve better results for learning. **EB Wilson Virtual High School (EBW)** believes in this concept. Therefore, they chose to promote character building for students with the key Speak with Good Purpose.

Administration and teachers at EBW want students to think before they speak, text, or post. They want students' intentions to be positive and sincere. Over the past nine weeks, EBW has found that the practice of Speak with Good Purpose has made a positive impact on the overall school environment. It has also improved productivity in all of the physical and virtual classrooms.



Ms. Kuchek (Ms. K), the virtual ELA teacher, has focused on incorporating this Key of Excellence within the speaking and listening standard taught to all grade levels. She states, "In today's world, words are powerful, and I want EBW students to be able to lead by example." Ms. K has collaborated with all staff at EBW to make sure they are leading by example.

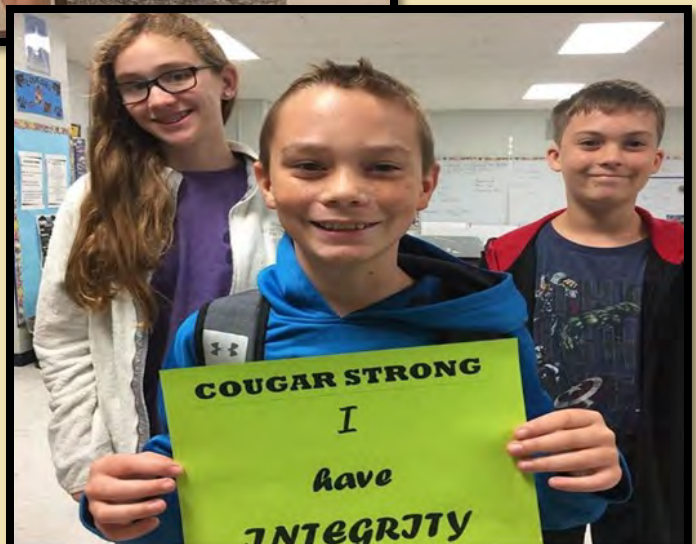
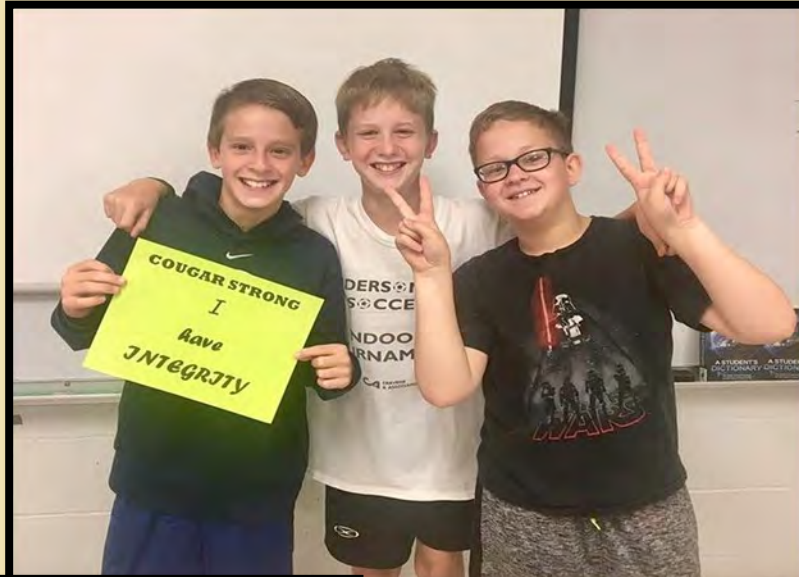
Teachers post positive notes in student restrooms so students are reminded of their worth. The intent is to ensure that the messages help students feel good about themselves. Ms. K also included this important key, Speak with Good Purpose, in her ELA debate on bullying. During the debate, students discuss the effects of bullying and debate the consequences that should be given to those that bully children inside and outside of the school environment.



Ellis Middle: Cougar Strong with Integrity

Students, faculty, and staff at **Ellis Middle School (EMS)** incorporate Quantum Learning in PAWS Advisory on a bi-weekly basis. In 2011, as a part of the Olweus Bully Prevention Program, EMS began PAWS (Positive Attitudes Will Succeed) as a schoolwide opportunity for students. Every two weeks, EMS students meet with an adult advocate to discuss various topics such as character education and goal setting. This year, faculty and staff will incorporate elements of Quantum Learning in PAWS meetings. Advisory meetings provide students with a safe environment and a dedicated adult, or advocate, with whom to connect and share concerns at EMS.

The most recent PAWS meeting focused on Integrity, one of the Eight Keys of Excellence. After previewing videos defining Integrity, EMS students were presented with a variety of scenarios. Students then used discussions and skits to demonstrate an understanding of Integrity. At the close of all PAWS meetings, students and teachers take selfies expressing their commitment to EMS and the Keys of Excellence. These selfies are posted on the school's Instagram account for students, parents, and community stakeholders to view the excellent spirit and character valued at EMS.



Station Camp Middle Ties Relationship to the Eight Keys of Excellence



At **Station Camp Middle School (SCMS)**, faculty and staff view each other as family. To support that family atmosphere, they teach character education in small, focused groups. All faculty and staff members are encouraged to build rapport with students in an effort to encourage trust, develop confidence, and instill good character.

“Every Monday, SCMS students meet for 15 minutes for Monday Message,” explains principal Brian Smith. “They are assigned to adult advocates who lead small groups through a character education program based on the Eight Keys of Excellence.” Each month, a different key serves as the

theme for Monday Message lessons and conversations.

For the month of September, students discussed the Integrity key. Discussions included the meaning of Integrity, the identification of great leaders who have shown authentic integrity, and how Integrity plays a role in making SCMS a thriving school culture. At the end of a month, a female student and a male student from each grade level is named as SCMS Students of the Month to showcase the theme’s character trait or Key of Excellence. These students are given the opportunity to sign the SCMS Students of the Month wall outside the cafeteria.

“I think the Monday Message meetings we have on a weekly basis are a great way to foster deep discussion on moral and ethical issues as well as an opportunity to build a deeper rapport with students,” science teacher Amy Radley states. “Middle school years are a crucial period in the lives of our students, and it can be a time of great emotional and social upheaval. In our first meeting, we discussed the idea of Integrity. The students squeezed in some great insights into our short meeting. Their ideas of Integrity were sometimes very black and white. It was fascinating to see the light go on in their heads as they examined scenarios with definite grey areas. I look forward to digging deeper into the Eight Keys as the year progresses!”

Benefits of Monday Message meetings are not just for students. “Most of the students in my advisory group are not in my classes, so I’m excited for the opportunity to get to know more students,” adds math teacher Nicole Lampton. The SCMS family appreciates the opportunity to impact the lives of students while building moral strength and establishing strong bonds of trust.



Shafer Middle Embraces Quantum Learning



Shafer Middle School (SMS) embraced Quantum Learning in a big way this school year. The school's resident Quantum Learning facilitator, Rachel Payne, started the school year with an extremely motivating training session. It was a great kickoff to fill teachers' "toolkits."

To create academic buy-in from the students at SMS, teachers use music and movement with learning activities and Quantum Learning changes of state. Teachers model and facilitate the use of the Eight Keys of Excellence to help students develop self-awareness, use positive behavior, and improve the overall school atmosphere. In addition, when reading novels, SMS ELA students look for the Eight Keys and positive character traits through character analysis.

Lastly, SMS teachers utilize callbacks, chants, and celebrations, rooted in Quantum Learning, as they work daily with students. These various strategies build rapport among the SMS family of learners.



effort
creates
ability



Excellence at Portland West Middle

Sixth grade can be a tough transition year. The teachers at **Portland West Middle School (PWM)** strive to help students learn to navigate eight different classes, the use of lockers, and a multitude of new experiences. After attending training this summer on the Eight Keys of Excellence, Ms. Schmidt decided to use the information to bridge elementary and middle school for her English/reading students.

After writing the heading “Eight Keys of Excellence” in their journals, PWM students defined the term excellence and were asked to share their insights on the term with the class. Some of the great ideas from these hard-working sixth grade PWM students included:

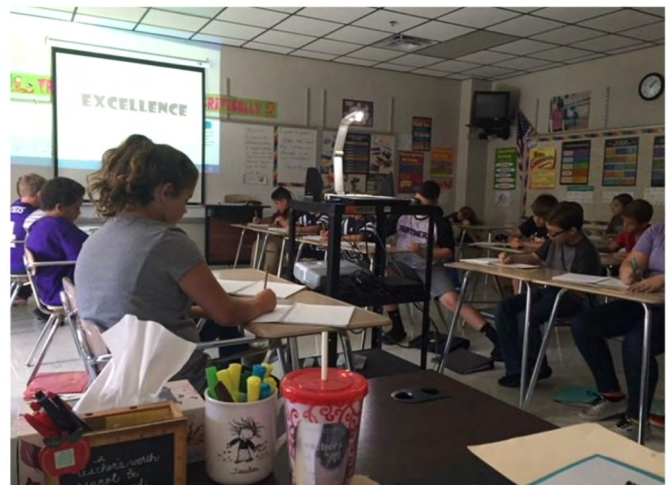
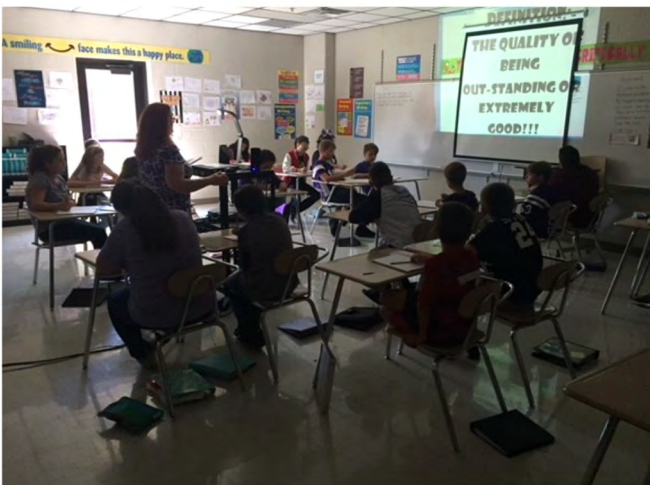
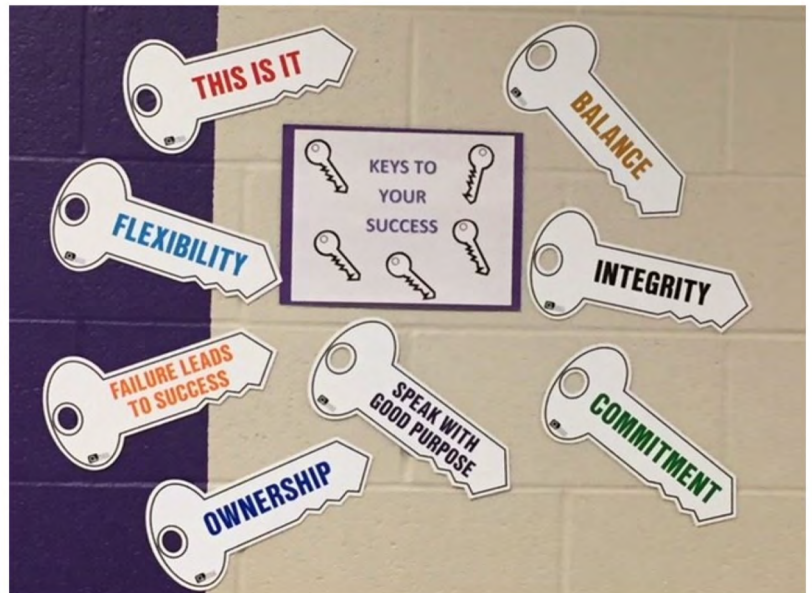
“We learned about these at my elementary school. I think it’s cool that we are doing them here too!”

“Without these keys, there’s no respect.”

“Excellence means to excel in life or to be your best and try hard every day.”

“You have to set your own standard and try to get better than you were.”

Combining great instruction with time-honored character education, Ms. Schmidt works hard to assist students at PWM to build a life foundation that leads to success. In the great words of Dr. Seuss, “And will you succeed? Yes! You will indeed! (98 ¾% guaranteed)” (Seuss. 1990).



Seuss, T. (1990). *Oh, the places you'll go*. New York, NY: Random House.

Guild Elementary Gators Walk the Red Carpet

Guild Elementary School (GES) collectively focuses on the Quantum Learning Eight Keys of Excellence. The keys work in connection with Guild Guide 25, which are 25 essential behaviors GES Gators are expected to demonstrate in school, at home, and within the community. These two sets of principles work seamlessly together to guide students to make confident choices and work cooperatively with others. They also aid in establishing a supportive, trusting school environment.

Monthly, one of the Eight Keys of Excellence is used to honor a deserving student in each class as a GES Student of the Month. Students being recognized have demonstrated positive character traits through their actions and attitudes at school. Each nine weeks, a Be More Awesome Assembly is held to celebrate the successes of these GES students. An inspirational music playlist is synced, the red carpet rolled out, and the GES Students of the Month line up for their moments in the spotlight! As GES principal Mr. Sawyers announces the names of the students, they make their way down the red carpet in style! Great pride is shown as each student receives high fives and cheers along the way. The paparazzi even get pictures of the GES Gator event!



North Sumner Elementary Rocks the Eight Keys of Excellence



North Sumner Elementary School (NSE) is abounding with excitement and enthusiasm over the Eight Keys of Excellence. The keys are posted in hallways, classrooms, and other prominent spots in the building. Classroom teachers are incorporating the keys into their lessons. Related Arts teachers are referring to them in every class. NSE's music teacher, Amy Oliver, took the Eight Keys, matched them with a popular tune, and added motions. The students have learned the routine to perform at the NSE Fall Festival.



NSE students are most focused on the keys Speak with Good Purpose and Ownership. By reviewing and modeling the keys often, students will grow to be respectful adults and contributing members of society. NSE knows a quality education involves academics and social skills!

A Nannie Berry Elementary House System meets Keys to Success

At Nannie Berry Elementary School (NBE), students in a third grade class and a fifth grade class team up to mentor one another. Mrs. Justus and Mrs. Barba use the house system in class to help encourage responsibility, ownership, teamwork, and perseverance. Through the house system, the students learn to work together as a team to earn points and to solve problems. On Fridays, the houses meet with the grade level extension. NBE students discuss any successes and struggles from the week and share ways they can make better choices.

During the first meetings, the fifth grade students discussed the keys Integrity, Ownership, and Failure Leads to Success. Students shared how important it is to take ownership and responsibility for their words and actions. They also examined times in school or home life when success did not occur right away, but they continued to push through, work hard, and do their best to succeed.



NBE Buddy Reading

The students of Mrs. Justus and Mrs. Barba also meet as buddy readers. Fifth grade students model read-and-discuss for third grade buddies. Then, the third grade buddies read with fifth grade students to apply phonics skills, to

sound out words, and to pay careful attention to author's marks. Through this collaboration, the NBE teams are able to hear and practice what a fluent reader sounds like while making a friend who is able to be an encourager in multiple aspects of the school setting.



George Whitten Elementary and Warrior Spirit



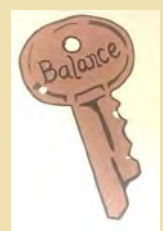
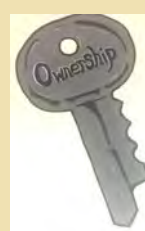
Once one walks the halls of **George Whitten Elementary School (GWE)**, it becomes quickly apparent how deeply committed the faculty and staff are to develop a positive atmosphere and foster a strong mindset of growth in young students. In fact, upon entering the cafeteria, GWE faculty, students, and visitors may view the proudly displayed mural of the Eight Keys of Excellence. It is the school's mission to provide a safe environment that is emotionally secure, academically challenging, and fosters social

responsibility to enable college and career ready citizens. Through the use of the Eight Keys, GWE has striven to create a thriving learning environment where students pledge daily to be safe, respectful, responsible, and, above all, "be [their] BEST!"

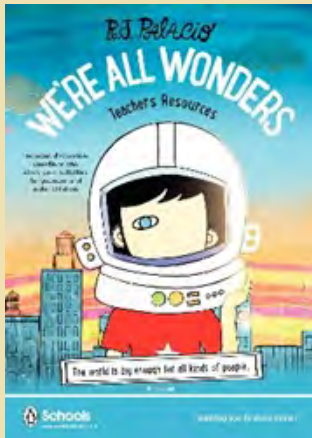
For school year 2017-18, GWE has renewed its support of Quantum Learning through the implementation of its Warrior Spirit teams, Visible Learning initiative, and schoolwide A-Team advocacy program. Each general education classroom is divided into teams named for the Keys of Excellence. The Warrior Spirit teams celebrate school pride and encourage positive behavior choices (e.g., living a balanced life) through informal and formal instruction where applicable.

Quantum Learning blends seamlessly with GWE's new Visible Learning initiative. At the beginning of the school year, the school's CDC teacher, Maranda Jeffers, organized a Commitment display. The display has student-created goals or "dreams" they would like to accomplish written on feathers. Teachers have also created goal-oriented displays that help students monitor progress and effort as well as adopt a more positive outlook toward learning. Through a growth mindset, students take ownership of learning, develop flexibility in approaches to challenges, and learn mistakes are integral to being successful learners.

Finally, GWE A-Teams are designed to help inspire integrity, honesty, and a sense of belonging. Through this advocacy program, faculty and staff work to form positive, trusting relationships between learner and teacher. This effort seeks to encourage students to use teamwork to discover they have the potential to achieve success in all aspects of life.



Gene Brown Elementary Says We Choose Kind

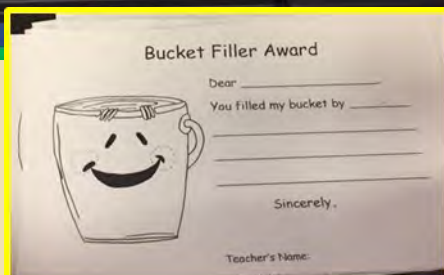
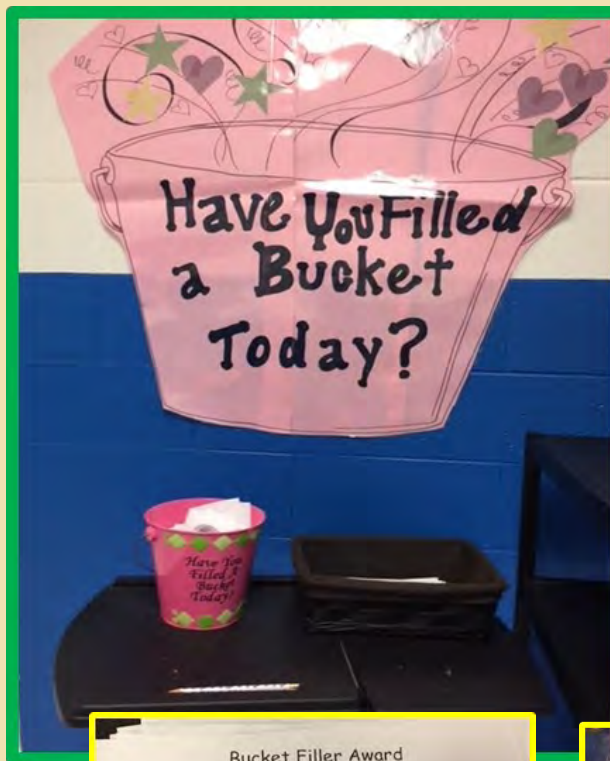


“When given the choice between being right or being kind, we choose kind!” is a quote from the novel *Wonder* by R. J. Palacio. It has also become the precept for the **Gene Brown Elementary School (GBE)** Bobcats this year. During the month of October, all K-2 students will be reading Palacio’s book *We’re All Wonders* while GBE students in third, fourth, and fifth grades will be reading *Wonder*.



Have you filled a bucket today? Mrs. Lee, GBE guidance counselor, encourages students to look for opportunities to fill someone’s bucket with kind words. Awards from the bucket are collected and delivered to students weekly!

What is a great way to show kindness to teachers? The CDC Friday Coffee Club! GBE students in Ms. Herndon’s CDC class have been loving on teachers weekly by making and delivering hot coffee to them. Fourth and fifth graders work alongside students in the class to make and deliver the special teacher treat as well as assist in payment collection.



¹Palacio, R.J. (2012). *Wonder*. New York, NY: Random House.

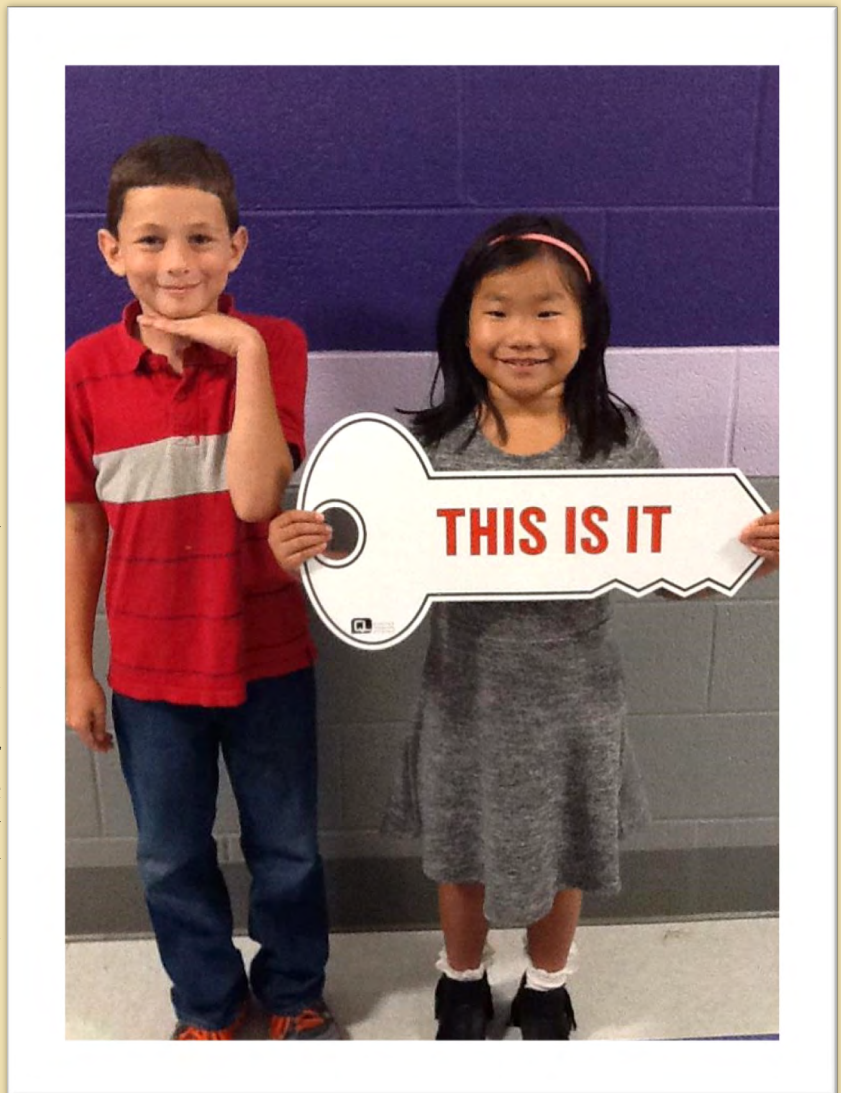
Watt Hardison Elementary and School Values

The **Watt Hardison Elementary School (WHE)** family strives to prepare students for success. Therefore, WHE teachers incorporate the Eight Keys of Excellence throughout the entire school day of learning! Mrs. Alia Adams, WHE guidance counselor, utilized instructional time at the beginning of the school year to familiarize students with the Eight Keys. With primary grades, Mrs. Adams taught hand movements for the keys to assist students in remembering them. In addition, she developed an interactive read aloud to help reinforce hand movements. For older students, Mrs. Adams made real-life connections with the Eight Keys. She created scenarios in which the students had to discuss and apply the appropriate keys. She found that connecting them to topics in the real world gave students a better appreciation for their meanings.

WHE also introduced three new school values:

**Be Respectful.
Be Responsible.
Be Safe.**

If students are practicing WHE Values or the Eight Keys of Excellence, they are given Panther Dollars. Students use their Panther Dollars to purchase various items and/or activities (e.g., no shoes day, eat lunch with teacher, sit in teacher's chair). Teachers spent the first few weeks of this school year making the connection between the keys and values for students. They used an expectation matrix to show how to apply the WHE values to all school settings, including the playground and bus.

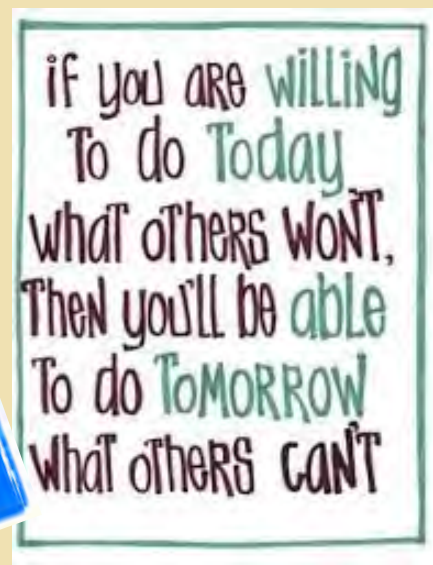


The Eight Keys of Excellence and the WHE Values promote a positive learning environment throughout the school. Teachers work very hard to make sure students know how to practice the keys in real-life situations. WHE is excited to see how students apply these positive principles throughout the school year!

Benny Bills Elementary Recognizes Excellence



Benny Bills Elementary (BBE) celebrated its BBE Students of the Month at a recent assembly. A student from each classroom was chosen for the honor based on the Eight Keys of Excellence. September's key is *This Is It*. Students learned that this key focuses on making positive choices and taking advantage of opportunities. BBE also chose a teacher and staff member for monthly recognition. Students left the assembly excited and inspired to learn more about the Eight Keys of Excellence!



Howard Elementary's First Grade Team Builds Character with ClassDojo



Two factors are definitively linked to improving character and preventing negative behavior: positive relationships with family and a sense of connectedness to school.¹ **Howard Elementary School's (HES)** first grade team fosters both through the use of the ClassDojo app. "Parental support and buy-in stems from connecting with parents and keeping them informed," states Mrs. Alison Clifton. ClassDojo provides that link for today's parents, many of whom are accustomed to being engaged by immediate information.

The app, ClassDojo, is a positive feedback platform emphasizing character development that connects parents, teachers, and students. Teachers and parents download this communication app on their phones, devices, or computers and use it on a daily basis. HES first grade teachers are in their second year of using the app and have nothing but great things to share regarding its reinforcement of the Keys of Excellence.

Bolstering Integrity

All HES students are expected to match behaviors with positive values. First graders are rewarded via app points for behaviors that stem from these values. Customizable behaviors are programmed into the app, and teachers instantly share positives and areas in need of improvement with parents. Mrs. Clifton observes, "I can let them [parents] know of all the wonderful things their child is doing . . . helping friends, cleaning up after themselves, 'filling a bucket,' following directions, being on task, etc." The ClassDojo app reinforces great things children are doing by allowing teachers to share these items with parents right when they happen.

Taking Ownership

Developing personal motivation is part of the HES vision for all learners. First graders learn the importance of taking responsibility. In the words of Ms. Ashley McCarver, "My students take ownership of their behavior as I share points with them." Mrs. Colby Turner uses the app to " . . . reinforce that hard work and giving everything 100 percent pays off." She holds a weekly contest for top point-earners and gives fun tickets to the winners. In Ms. Abbey Skelly's class, she says, "Students take ownership of their behaviors as they see their points and have a goal to work toward."

Finding Flexibility

The ClassDojo app generates communication between school and family and encourages students to alter negative behaviors and achieve goals. Students change undesired behaviors and improve academic focus " . . . because they know how everyone can see this," according to Mrs. Heather Carr. The teachers also encourage flexibility by rewarding students who make productive changes during the day. If students lose points for negative actions, they can re-earn them by changing course. Teachers provide many ways for students to track their progress. "Dojo is used in conjunction with our clip chart and a Race-to-100 chart which rewards students after earning 100 points," states Ms. Skelly. And the flexibility aspect applies to parents. Mrs. Carr adds, "The app gives parents flexibility to check on their child when they have breaks in their busy days."

"Howard's first grade classrooms work together as part of the school community to encourage shared school values and give parents the opportunity to keep up with their child's day as it happens," Ms. Skelly expresses. The grade group is fostering great relationships with families and helping our students feel connected to school. Their consistent use of this tool greatly reinforces the Keys of Excellence. Listen to Ms. McCarver and "Check it out!"

¹www.8keys.org Reference to study by Dr. Victor Battistich.



First Grade Students at Howard Elementary





First Grade Students at Howard Elementary





First Grade Students at Howard Elementary



Quantum Learning Eight Keys of Excellence Family Program

Families, if interested in information on the Quantum Learning Eight Keys of Excellence Family Program, please use this link <http://www.8keys.org/register.aspx> to register for the free program. It is an eight-week action plan for strengthening family relationships and deepening the feeling of connectedness. The website provides access to Eight Keys resources, videos, and a discussion board to interact with other families. The program allows schools and families to work together with common themes for the social and emotional development of children. Sumner County Schools values the family-school relationship and knows our families do too!