**Evaluation: Caring School Community®**

**Snapshot**
Cooperating School Districts of St. Louis, MO
- 40 schools

**Background**
In this four-year, third-party study funded by the U.S. Department of Education, forty schools in the Cooperating School Districts of St. Louis were randomly assigned to four treatment groups of ten schools each—three groups of schools implemented CSC, the fourth group served as a control. The three treatment groups of CSC schools began implementing CSC in successive years: the first group in 2002–03, the second group in 2003–04, and the third group in 2004–05. Outcomes were measured annually via surveys of students, surveys of teaching staffs, records of student discipline referrals, and Missouri state achievement test scores in math and reading.

As the following graphs indicate, improvement in student achievement correlated directly with each year of CSC implementation. **Overall, math achievement in CSC program schools showed a 54% improvement; communication arts achievement in CSC program schools showed a 46% improvement.** These gains are particularly impressive because the CSC program does not include either reading or math instruction.

*Percentage of Students Proficient or Advanced on the Missouri State Achievement Test*
In addition to CSC’s positive effects on student achievement, the study also showed that CSC had statistically significant effects (Effect Size < .01) on school climate and student behavior:

- **Safer learning communities**: CSC program schools became safer, more orderly, learning communities; staff members more often worked together collaboratively. Effect Size = .17

- **Increased staff collaboration**: In CSC program schools, staff more often formed collaborative teams that regularly shared ideas, strategies, and successes; engaged together in reflection on the results of instructional activities; and worked together on instructional planning. ES = .21

- **Improved classroom strategies**: In CSC program schools, students more often discussed the role values play in their behavior, helped set classroom norms and rules, and planned schools’ activities involving students, parents, and staff; cross-age student pairs were more likely to engage in learning activities and reflection; students and parents more often jointly engaged in learning activities; and whole-school activities were more frequently employed to foster relationships among children, staff, and families. ES = .35

- **Students more often demonstrated good character**: CSC program students more often learned to work cooperatively and have a strong sense of democratic values. ES = .22

- **Improved student discipline**: Student behavior referrals decreased for CSC program schools compared to control schools. As the following graph shows, there was a 24% decline in student discipline referrals (for bullying, aggression, fighting, vandalism, insolence, and cheating) in CSC program schools, compared to a 42% increase in student referrals in the control schools. ES = .40. (See chart below.)
The average number of discipline referrals in CSC schools went down by 48 per year. The average number of discipline referrals in control schools went up by 88 per year.