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Summary notes:

- what is important is that we are looking at the positive strengths in children rather than focusing on their deficits
- When a student is weak in a certain area, identify the strengths that can shore up weaknesses
- The motto of KIPP is “Work Hard, Be Nice” – there is a book with this title by Jay Mathews
- KIPP started off focusing on the REACH Values:
 - o Respect
 - o Enthusiasm
 - o Achievement
 - o Citizenship
 - o Hard Work
 - Then they were able to take these strengths and incorporate the VIA Character strengths to align with these REACH values
- So now KIPP focuses on 7 character strengths:
 - o Optimism
 - o Zest
 - o Gratitude
 - o Self-Control
 - o Curiosity
 - o Social Intelligence
 - o Grit
- So they took each one of these character strengths and they really defined them and listed the behaviors that were associated with each character strength. Each one of the strengths is defined in the powerpoint slides.
- Then they make sure that the faculty is modeling these character strengths. When faculty come on board they go through their own training regarding strengths and identify where they are strong and where they are not as strong so they can relate to the students.
- Parents/faculty/students all have to sign an agreement that they will be committed to building character and be highly engaged in what they are doing at KIPP. So they are bought in from day one.
- When there are parents that are not so engaged they focus on sending parents positive feedback. So if they are contacting the parents for positive reasons, then it becomes easier for KIPP faculty to reach out when there is an ask.
- KIPP has a CHARACTER GROWTH CARD – it is not a report card, but it is a measurement tool that students can rate themselves on. See the slides.

- The Character growth card has all 7 character strengths on the card and students can rate themselves and teachers can rate themselves on the strengths and then develop them
- The card acts as a conversation piece. The focus with the card is for individuals vs. schools.
- Christy discussed heart strengths vs. head strengths
- If you take a look at the character strengths in general and see where the general population rates on each character strength, that is important to consider. For example, self-control is the lowest character strength for the North American population so don't be so hard on kids that are low in that strength, but rather work on ways they can build their self-control muscles.
- Christy mentioned that they have to work on the adults first. Adults need to model these behaviors first. Parents need to be engaged and model.
- All faculty is trained in the VIA Character strengths before they even start working at KIPP.
- When kids need help developing their strengths they solicit the assistance of other kids to help out. So if a student is just about to get mad, another student will be solicited to help that student calm down and control their emotions.