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AN EVALUATION OF THE HONOR CODE AT CHERRY HILL HIGH SCHOOL
EAST

by
John Edward Burns

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
May 1, 2005

Approved by
Professor

Date Approved May 2005

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ABSTRACT

John Edward Burns
AN EVALUATION OF THE HONOR CODE AT CHERRY HILL HIGH SCHOOL
EAST
2004/05

Dr. Ronald Capasso
Master of Arts in School Administration

The purposes of this evaluation were to (a) ascertain the present status of the Honor Code at Cherry Hill High School East by conducting surveys and focus groups; and (b) make recommendations for improvement of the Code, after an analysis of the feedback. Students, staff, and parents were surveyed using an open-ended question survey technique. Focus groups of these same constituents allowed for a more in-depth analysis of perceptions, feelings, and ideas about the Code. Many of the original aspects of the Code had been lost over the past five years of its existence. Students felt that in its present form, the Honor Code was not meaningful to them, and that it was a waste of time to write down on each test/major assessment. They did, however, know what it was supposed to mean. Parents felt strongly that teachers need to be clearer with assignment directions to help students avoid issues of plagiarism. Teachers also felt that students did not take the Code seriously, and that their colleagues were not consistent in enforcement. Recommendations focused on ways to help teachers and students realize the importance of the Honor Code, while reminding all stakeholders of the consequences of violations.

Acknowledgements

Work like this does not get done without the help of many individuals. My family is to be acknowledged first and foremost. My wife Susan has had to work extra hard to keep the house running smoothly as I proceeded down the “graduate school road” yet again. My children, Emma and Tommy are to be thanked for their understanding of why Daddy was out to college so many nights. My field mentor, Mr. Charles Martine has been great to work with, and I have learned so many things about running a building, dealing with people, and squeezing as much as possible from the limited resources that were available to us. My secretary Mrs. Donna Orliner was also invaluable in terms of helping with data collection and coding. I also wish to thank Dr. Ronald Capasso for his help and insight to make my degree program meaningful. The Cherry Hill Board of Education is to be thanked for allowing me the flexibility to create an Administrative Intern job description that gave me the time to adequately learn about the job of an administrator. The assistance of Dr. Morton Sherman – Superintendent, Mr. James Gallagher – Assistant Superintendent, and the Cherry Hill High School East Principal – Dr. John O’Breza also helped to make for a meaningful internship experience.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Focus of the Study

The focus of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the honor code that is currently in place at Cherry Hill High School East (High School East). This code exists to allow the students to demonstrate that they have honor, and can be trusted to not cheat on homework, papers, and tests. The remaining schools in the district do not have an honor code at the present time. How the stakeholders define success or effectiveness of the honor code, in comparison with honor code programs in place at other schools was considered an important part of the work. The various components of the honor code and the effectiveness given to the code were examined in light of their importance to its overall success.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the current honor code system using a community based action research design. The study will result in a feasibility study to inform educators, parents, and students. The use of an honor code system means that students are trusted, and they sign a pledge indicating that all work they are submitting to a teacher is their own, and that they have not copied or cheated.

Definitions

Honor code A system of rules stating that the students are entrusted to behave honestly by not cheating on a test, copying the work of others, plagiarizing on a lab or paper in a school situation.

Action research A type of applied research investigating a specific problem with the intent of improving practice within a small number of classrooms or schools.

Limitations of the Study

There is a small sample size of one high school that was used for this study, the other high school in the district was not used, and no middle schools were included. All of these schools do not have an honor code in place. High School East is the only school in the district that has a code in place. The intern did not survey the ninth grade student population, as they had not been at the high school long enough to experience the honor code, thus they were not included as part of this study. Students were randomly surveyed from the remaining grades (10-12).

Setting of the Study

This study took place in the comprehensive K-12 school district of Cherry Hill, located in the town of Cherry Hill, NJ. Cherry Hill is a 24 square mile community lying outside the city of Philadelphia, PA across the Delaware River. The population has grown to over 70,000 residents in recent years. This population is 85% white, 4.5% African American, and 9 % Asian. Mayor Bernie Platt, has been in the position for the past few years, working together with a Town Council consisting of 7 members. The tax base of the community is based upon taxes to businesses (approximately 4,000), and private residences (approximately 26,000). The Cherry Hill Mall is the largest taxpayer

in the township (using 2001 data). There is a disparity of wealth in the township with many of the wealthier citizens living on the east side of town, where the houses are newer, larger, and more expensive.

The school district consists of over 11,500 students housed in 19 buildings. Enrollment numbers have increased 1,700 students in the past 10 years. This increase is due to older residents selling their homes to parents with young children, who are entering the school system. With an early childhood center, 12 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, 2 high schools, and an alternative high school program, Cherry Hill is the 13th largest school district and one of the largest suburban districts in New Jersey. The district has approximately 1,300 staff members, including 950 teachers. Winning a number of awards is nothing new to the district either. One special award was a Blue Ribbon School Award (U.S. Department of Education) for High School East in 2002. Several Cherry Hill schools also have won NJ Best Practice awards, and students perform well on various tests (High School Proficiency Assessment; Advanced Placement Tests; Scholastic Aptitude Tests; etc.). Community support for education is mixed. In 1999 a \$52 million bond issue was passed by the voters to undertake new construction and renovation to many district buildings. Another bond is being proposed to address facility maintenance issues that must be take care of in the near future. In terms of passing budgets, the history is one of voter apathy. There is a consistent population of senior citizens that votes against budgets. There is a glaring lack of voter support from parents with students currently in the middle and high schools when examining the number of people voting at the various schools. Efforts by the district, PTA, and community were great for the 2004 budget, and over 9500 votes were cast (the most votes in two decades).

High School East has just over 2,100 students in grades 9-12. There are 150 teachers, a majority of whom have at least a Master's degree. 95% of the students continue their education beyond East. The school boasts many National Merit Scholarship competitors, as well as students who do well on AP exams. The classes in the 9th and 10th grade are the largest, each having over 560 students. Recent efforts in the school (as well as the district), have been directed towards making students feel more connected to the school, improving achievement in mathematics, closing the achievement gap, and improving business efficiency.

Significance of the Study

This study made a contribution to practice in the whole school. The school community benefited from a review of the East honor code, because an honor code sets up expectations of behavior, and it was believed that reviewing and renewing the Cherry Hill East honor code would elevate student behavior, and continue to compliment an already existing Character Education Program in place for all district students.

Relationship of the Study to the ISLLC Standards

This study gave the intern an opportunity to extend and enhance skills in the following knowledge areas: Planning, research methods, communication, student growth and development, adult learning and professional development models, change process, development of successful models for school and community partnerships, ethical frameworks and codes of ethics, and the social and cultural processes impacting a school.

For disposition areas, the intern found that the study improved awareness of reflective practice, continuous improvement, taking risks and accepting responsibility for school improvement, involving and trusting stakeholders in decision making, safe

environment, high expectations for all, schools as a function of community, collaboration and communication with informed and caring families and community, involvement in partnership with shared decision making, ethical decision making and its responsibilities and consequences, caring and diverse school community, active participation in policy making, importance of continuing dialogue among stakeholders and decision makers, and protection of students' rights.

For performance areas, this study allowed the intern to engage in the following activities to demonstrate: Shared vision that is based upon data, vision mission, goals, objectives and strategies clearly articulated and communicated to all stakeholders through multiple strategies, stakeholders share responsibility in achieving vision and mission, human dignity and respect, high expectations for student and staff performance, school culture and climate assessed regularly, research base for decision making, stakeholders included in shared decision making, effective group process, group consensus and communication skills, issues of confidentiality and privacy of student records, use of community information from all, even diverse, stakeholders, responsibility for leadership actions, reflective practice on the meaning of leadership, appreciation and sensitivity for a diverse community and the beliefs of all stakeholders, a school environment that focuses on students and learning, and collaborative communication among all stakeholders.

Through this study, the intern grew as a leader. Having to undertake action research on a project that impacted the entire school was important to the intern's development of leadership skills. Working with students of all ability levels, various building employees, and parent groups allowed the intern the opportunity to develop the skills needed to be able to interact positively with these groups in the future.

Organization of the Study

The remainder of this study is organized in the following way: Chapter 2 – review of the literature. This chapter examines the existing literature regarding the philosophy and background of various honor code programs currently seen in high schools and colleges. Chapter 3 – Design of the study. This chapter explains how the research took place. Chapter 4 – Presentation of findings. This chapter describes the major findings of the study. Chapter 5 – Conclusions, implications, and further study. This chapter pulls together the major findings, the implications to the school and community, and examines how the work could be continued in the future.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

Perceptions of Cheating

Cheating – “It’s no big deal. Everyone does it. And, if you do it carefully, you’ll never get caught” (Kasman-Valenza, 2004). This attitude, as conveyed by a high school student, seems to be a common one through the high school and university scene. Cheating is seen as a means to get what you want (good grades, admission to a prestigious university, etc.) without hurting anyone else - a victimless crime (ETS, 1999; Newberger, 2003d). Motivational issues prompting students to cheat might include performance concerns: course failure; flunking out; failure to graduate; desire for high GPA. There also can be external pressures put upon the students that can be both academic (workload, bad professor, etc.) and non-academic (illness, graduate/professional school attendance desire) in nature. Reasons that people cheat might include the perception that cheating can be gotten away with (Newberger, 2003b), and if caught, only small punishments will be dolled out, it is a crime of opportunity, etc. (University of North Carolina, 2004). Students do not have to look far to find examples of cheating scandals in well known companies such as: Arthur Anderson, Enron, WorldCom (Howard, 2002). When such scandals occur, companies spend years trying to repair their reputations (King, 2003). The evidence is pointing to the idea that a willingness to cheat has become the norm, and there is not much the community leaders

(teachers, coaches, clergy, and parents) can do to stop the flow (Josephson Institute of Ethics, 2002; ETS, 1999; Newberger, 2003a). Some people believe that the ends justify the means, and also believe that being dishonest is an acceptable practice (Howard, 2002). In many classrooms, there is a win-at-all-cost attitude amongst the students, putting grades and personal satisfactions above anything else (White, 1996). Oftentimes students are under tremendous pressure to succeed (especially if the parents have achieved a high status). Fear of failure, and fear of not wanting to be the loser have been listed as reasons for cheating (Niels, 2003). Based on these examples of cheating out in the real world, it is no wonder that cheating is seen in high schools, where cheating is often accepted and overlooked by peers (Howard, 2002). Many times, teachers do not want to go through the hassles of an investigation, and will tend to look the other way, so there is little deterrence based on student fear (Newberger, 2003c).

How Widespread is Cheating?

In a report by the Josephson Institute of Ethics, the number of incidences of cheating, lying, and stealing have continued their steady upward climb. In a survey of 12,000 high school students, 74% admitted to having cheated on an exam at least once in the past year, as compared with 62% in 1992. There was a significant increase of 3% just between 2000 and 2002 (Josephson Institute of Ethics, 2002). Despite the fact that 63% of Penn State students had professors discuss the honor code in their classes, 17% of the students said they cheated on tests, and 44% admitted to cheating on class assignments (Groark and Oblinger, 2001). The Connecticut Department of Public Health conducted a survey in 1997 of 9th and 11th graders, and found that 63% of 11th graders and 62% of 9th graders admitted to cheating on an exam during the past school year (ETS, 1999). In the

29th *Who's Who Among American High School Students Poll* conducted in 1998, revealed that 80% of the students had cheated to get to the top of their class. More than half felt that cheating was not a big deal. 95% admitted to not being caught, with 40% cheating on a quiz or test, and 67% copying homework from another student (ETS, 1999). ETS is trying to be proactive in understanding and attempting to prevent it from occurring. Don McCabe of Rutgers University found that between 1990 and 1995, small-to-medium campuses having a strong honor code had 57% of students reporting they had cheated at least once, while on most campuses, 80% reported cheating (Sachs, n. d.). McCabe also found in a 1999 survey that more than 75% of college students admit to some type of cheating (Clarke-Pearson, 2001). McCabe compared his data to that of Bowers from the 1960's, and found that the rate of cheating is more or less stable, but the level of stability is still quite high (Wesleyan University, n. d.). Examining high schools, McCabe found in a survey of 4,000 students at 25 schools during 2000 - 2001, that 74% admitted to at least one incidence of serious test cheating, while 72% admitted to serious written assignment cheating (Center for Academic Integrity, 2003). Many students just do not feel that certain forms of cheating are very serious. 79% felt copying from a classmate on an exam was a serious offense, while 72% felt that helping someone else to cheat was serious, and only 24% felt that collaborating on an assignment with classmates was serious, even when a professor asked for individual work (College Administration Publications, n.d.). McCabe found that students with lower GPAs tend to cheat as frequently as students with high GPAs (reflecting this trend in the form of a U-shaped curve) (Wahlers, 1998).

How Do Students Cheat?

There are many means students use to cheat the system. Copying from a classmate, using a cheat sheet or crib notes, hiding answers in pens, shoes, hats, water bottles, or other items, hand/foot signals to classmates, recording answers on CD's or tapes, and listening to them while testing, using clear lip gloss on the answers of a Scantron™ sheet (Bogle, 2000). Downloading papers from the internet (sometimes termed "cut and paste plagiarism") has increased in recent years (Clarke-Pearson, 2001). Ready-made papers and custom written papers are available online, as are websites used by instructors to find instances of plagiarism by students (Iloff and Xiao, n.d.; Groark and Oblinger, 2001). Research by McCabe in his 1999 and 2001 surveys (Center for Academic Integrity, 2003) found that 10% of the students engaged in internet plagiarism in 1999, and this number increased to 41% in 2001. In some cases, academic dishonesty takes the form of not reporting apparent violations of an honor code when they are witnessed (Wesleyan University, n. d.). Newer forms of cheating sometimes result from unauthorized collaboration that is not clearly prohibited by professors (Center for Academic Integrity, 2003). McCabe is concerned that the internet savvy teenagers of today will be relying to an increasing extent on internet research, and because of this, an increase in internet plagiarism by students as they move into college will be seen (College Administration Publications, n. d.)

History of Honor Codes

One of the first honor codes arose at the University of Virginia in 1842. Designed to have proper ideas of conduct and behavior, the system was initially developed by a professor. Although it has undergone several periods of change, it remains a system that

is entirely student run (University of Virginia Honor Committee, n. d.) It is considered one of the most prestigious Honor Codes in higher education. Moral values are considered throughout the whole community as well as the university. If a student is found guilty of a violation, they are immediately removed from the community. Virginia University would like to achieve a level of complete honesty and trust within the community (Rubright, 2001). In 1924 Duke University founded their “Honor System” that came about through student government initiatives. Also undergoing several changes over the years, now a system is in place that is called the “Duke Community Standard” (introduced in 2003). Duke also has an Honor Code Signing Ceremony (introduced in 2000). Previously, prior to becoming Duke University there were various attempts at an honor code but they did not survive over time (Duke University Honor Council, 2004).

The University of Maryland pioneered the idea of a “modified” honor code. This means that there is a traditional system that includes closer collaboration and partnerships with faculty members and administrators. The call for a Code came in the early 1980’s. Campus leaders were skeptical, as Maryland did not have a “tradition” of an honor code. But they wanted to “change the culture on campus” by instilling pride in academic honesty (Student Honor Council, n.d.).

The military also has codes of honor. They live under the adage that dishonorable behaviors like lying, cheating, and stealing are unacceptable, and not only that, they must not put up with dishonorable behavior from others (Kellogg, 2001). The military academies are recognizing though, that they must do more with their new recruits to reflect the changes seen in terms of honorable behavior (Zubeck, 2003).

Characteristics of Honor Codes

An honor code typically has at least one, if not several of the following characteristics; obligation to report dishonorable behavior by classmates, students judging cases, and/or some sort of honor pledge (McCabe, and Treviño, 2002; Wesleyan University, n. d.). This pledge could be a ceremonious event, such as the one held at Vanderbilt University (Howard, 2002), or a detailed book that is sometimes used as a “doorstop” (Heap, 2002). At the University of Virginia, punishment for an honor code violation is dismissal. Some graduates have even returned their degrees because of an earlier violation. At most schools though, the act of coming forward is regarded as a step in a positive direction, and a punishment short of rescinding a degree or expulsion is given (Bassett, 2002).

An interesting thought comes from Lynn Morton of the Queens University of Charlotte regarding honor. She feels that when discussing honor codes, words of obligation are typically used, and this puts students in the position that they feel that they MUST behave honorably, and not cheat. Dr. Morton says that students chose to come to the university, and can make the choice to behave honorably or not. There is a culture that students are free to choose to be a part of or not. If the students do not want to behave in that way, they should choose another school (Morton, 2004).

Norfolk Academy has an honor system that strives to help strengthen their individual moral development, improve their capacity to make good, sound decisions about basic matters of right and wrong in their lives. This system is built upon the assumption that all members of the community are basically honest people, with the

caveat that personal honor must be practiced and refined over time (Manning, n. d.).

Brookwood High School also feels that an essential part of a child's education is developing a sense of honor, responsibility, and ethical principals that will extend to all phases of their life. Honesty and individual efforts, when used to face challenges, will allow self-esteem and self-respect to grow (Brookwood High School, n. d.)

Not everyone agrees with Honor codes though. At the University of Maryland, some students felt skeptical that the honor pledge does anything to improve honesty, and only serves as a "juvenile" reminder. Others felt that an honor code pledge would be unenforceable and ineffective (Parsons, 2001). It also puts students in an awkward position when they have to report fellow students who are in violation of the code (McCarthy, 2004; Spangler, 2000). Those students forced to sign an honor code insults the integrity of a person who would never cheat, "Why do I have to prove myself each time?" (Spangler, 2000).

Research shows that schools having honor codes do see less instances of cheating than those schools not having a code (Wahlers, 1998). McCabe found that schools with an honor code typically have 1/3 – 1/2 lower incidences of cheating than schools without a code. Honor codes tend to transfer responsibility to students, causing them to think about and struggle with the issue (Clarke-Pearson, 2001).

In Conclusion

Given this information, the study illustrated here was designed to examine the honor code of Cherry Hill High School East for its effectiveness by gauging student, parent, and teacher definitions of cheating, and comparing this data with published research. The intern also sought to determine if the honor code needed revision because

it was not meeting its originally designed goal of improving student awareness of cheating behavior, and reducing the instances of its occurrence.

CHAPTER 3

The Design of the Study

Description of Research Design

The research design for this study included a search of material culture to determine the history of the present honor code that is in place for Cherry Hill High School East. Open-ended question surveys were developed for administration to selected students and staff. Focus groups of students and parents were convened to address additional questions in a group setting. Based upon the results of the surveys and focus groups, a plan was developed to make the East community more informed about the honor code.

Focus on Research Instruments

The research instruments used for the student surveys were 6 question open-ended surveys designed to gauge a 10th-12th grade student's awareness of the honor code, determine what it means to them, and get a sense of the satisfaction level with the honor code in its current state, as well as giving the student a chance to make suggestions for change (See Appendix 1 for a copy of the Student Survey).

Student Questions

1. What does the East Honor Code mean to you?
2. How did you first find out about the honor code at High School East?
3. How are you supposed to indicate that you have not violated the honor code?
4. Last year how often (give an approximate number of times) did your teachers discuss the honor code in class (List the class and number of times).

5. Do you have any complaints about the honor code as it stands now?
6. Do you have any suggestions to make the honor code more meaningful to East students?

The intern wanted to ascertain how students first find out about the honor code. Was the method of introduction consistent among students, or were there several different mechanisms used to explain the honor codes system. With question 4, the intern sought to determine the reinforcement mechanism utilized by teachers to remind students that they are working under the honor system when they take tests and quizzes. It also allowed the intern to begin to understand what portion of the faculty is consistently making their students aware of the code. Students have their own opinions about their schooling, and question 5 allows students to voice any concerns or complaints about the honor code, or how they are introduced to it. As students, question 6 allows them a voice for change, to make the code something that can be more meaningful for them, so there is more appreciation by students. Results can be examined by grade level to see how the experience of the students changes as they have more years in school.

Seven question teacher surveys were similar in terms of assessing the attitude of the teachers, but included questions asking the frequency of discussion about the honor code in their classroom (See Appendix 2 for a complete copy of the Teacher Survey).

Teacher Questions

1. What does the East Honor Code mean to you?
2. How did you first find out about the honor code at High School East?
3. How do you have your students indicate that they have not violated the honor code?
4. Last year how often (give an approximate number of times) did you discuss the honor code in class (List the number of times, and reason for discussion).

5. What do you think you are supposed to do if a student violates the honor code one time; more than once?
6. Do you have any complaints about the honor code as it stands now?
7. Do you have any suggestions to make the honor code more meaningful to East students?

For the teaching staff, some of them were introduced to the honor code via faculty meetings, department meetings, memos, etc. New staff, however, did not receive this training, and the intern wanted to know how they were exposed to the code, and based on that, how have they introduced the code to their students, and does this way differ from those of more experienced teachers. Question 3 sought to determine if teachers are consistent in how they have students indicate that they are in compliance with the honor code. In terms of discipline issues, question 5 tried to gauge if teachers handle honor code violations within the classroom, or they turn the matter over to the Grade Level Assistant Principal. The information obtained from the surveys was compared with the staff focus groups so the intern could make inferences about teacher training. Again, the intern desires to know how often teachers are mentioning the code in their classes. Is it a one time event, or is it consistently reinforced throughout the year when appropriate. Teachers were also given the chance to have complaints about the current system, as well as make suggestions for change to make the honor code more meaningful for East students.

For the focus groups of students, teachers, and parents, the intern engaged the groups in a discussion of the honor code while seeking answers to 6 group-appropriate questions.

Focus Group of Students:

1. How could we enhance the meaning of the code for East students?

2. How/When should students indicate that they are in compliance with the code?
3. What could teachers and administrators do to make the code more effective?
4. How should the discipline punishments change for those students found guilty of an Honor Code Violation?
5. What should the training look like for the students to have a better understanding of the code?
6. On what kind of assessments should students indicate compliance with the code and why?

Student Focus Groups were used to allow students the opportunity to voice their opinions about the honor code. The intern was interested in the student opinion of what needed to be done in terms of initial exposure, compliance, discipline, student training, and on what kinds of assignments should the honor code be given. The use of small groups allowed for intimate discussions between the students and the intern, so that all student opinions could be heard and collected.

Focus Group of East Parents:

1. What is your awareness of the honor code at High School East?
2. What would you like your son or daughter to learn/know/understand about honor codes?
3. What changes would you suggest be made regarding the current honor code?
4. How should students indicate that they have followed the honor code?
5. Have you discussed the honor code with your child? If so, in what context?
6. What ideas do you have for motivating East students to be interested in the code?

By involving East parents, the intern sought to understand the parent perspective with the honor code system. With these questions, the intern can determine parent awareness, and their personal feelings of what students should know about acting with honor in their

schoolwork. The intern also wanted to know if they have actually discussed the honor code with their children, and if they had, what was the situation where this discussion occurred. Parent input for potential changes to the code was also solicited during the parent focus groups.

Focus Group of Staff Members:

1. How should the students and parents learn about the code?
2. Should this training/information session occur annually?
3. What are some changes to the code that could enhance the meaning of it for students?
4. What should the punishment be for those who violate the honor code?
5. When should the honor code apply in the classroom (should specific items be spelled out)?
6. How should the students indicate that they have followed the code on specific pieces of work?

New and seasoned East staff members were sought out by the intern to truly get a broad spectrum of perspectives regarding the honor code. The intern wanted to probe faculty to learn how the students should learn about the code, and whether it should occur with regularity or not. Teachers were also asked about discipline, to see if there should be any changes made to the current discipline penalties for honor code violations.

Teachers were also given the opportunity to suggest specific items (labs, projects, etc.) that they felt should fall under the guidelines of the honor code.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample was the 10th-12th grade students of Cherry Hill High School East, a comprehensive 9-12 high school located in the suburban town of Cherry Hill. The total

student population is close to 2200 students. One hundred staff members of this school (125 total) were used for the survey portion, as well as the focus group. The parents of students in the 10th-12th grade were used for the parent focus group.

Sampling techniques included utilizing different open-ended questionnaires distributed to students, teaching staff and parents. Focus groups were also utilized to gather more detailed information, and concrete recommendations for change. Students were selected by homeroom, so that instructions could be clearly given to the students. Three homerooms per grade level were randomly selected by drawing homeroom numbers from a jar. Teachers were surveyed by randomly placing the open-ended questionnaire inside their mailboxes. Volunteers were solicited for the focus groups by attending various club meeting, sports practices, and other smaller learning groups, and were given an explanation as to why they were needed, and the importance of the role they would play in terms of the honor code.

Data Collection Approach

Surveys were submitted by the homeroom teachers in their mailboxes to our Attendance Secretary. This person sorted the forms and gave them to the researcher. During the focus groups, an assistant served as a scribe, taking careful notes of the answers to the questions, ideas, and suggestions of the group members.

Data Analysis Plan

Surveys were grouped by grade level, and then were coded based upon the responses to the open-ended questions. Trends were noted, and were used to compare with the focus group data to develop recommendations to improve the honor code. Recommendations from the surveys and focus groups were shared with school

administrators, as were suggested changes to the honor code and how it is introduced to students.

Types of Evidence Gathered Demonstrating the Study Can Have an Impact

Through the open-ended surveys and the focus groups of stakeholders, people were able to reflect on the honor code and what it means to them. As a part of this reflection, ideas for change came to the surface. The focus groups allowed people to listen to the ideas of others, infuse their own points, and through these meetings, shape the future of the honor code at High School East. The true measure of the impact of this study will occur once the changes are made to the code, and the stakeholders are surveyed to compare their thoughts of the changes to the code, with what they had known previously.

CHAPTER 4

Presentation of Research Findings

Material Culture

A search of material culture regarding the history of the Honor Code at Cherry Hill High School East revealed minutes from two meetings held during April, 2000 where the aspects of implementation, and enforcement were discussed. Some of the key points for implementation included:

- A blown-up copy of the Honor Code pledge will be displayed in every classroom.
- At the beginning of the school year, each student will be given a copy of the Honor Code to take home for the signature of the student and his/her parent(s). Their signatures indicate that they have read and are aware of the Honor Code; they do not imply acceptance or rejection of the Code.
- A copy of the Honor Code will also be included in the Student Handbook.
- The Honor Code will be a part of the course syllabus/ expectations given out by each teacher at the beginning of the year.
- Honor Code infractions will be reported on a special form, not the current white card.
- Students will be asked to sign the pledge when submitting major tests or assignments, such as term papers, mid-term examinations, and final examinations.

Consequences of the Honor Code violations were determined to be:

- First offense: A student will be given a zero for the test/assignment. An Honor Code referral form will be submitted by the teacher to the grade level assistant principal. The assistant principal will notify parents of the infraction.
- Second offense: In addition to the above, the student's guidance counselor and the Coordinator of Student Affairs will be notified. The counselor will talk to or send a letter to the student reminding him/her of the seriousness of Honor Code violations.

- Third offense: In addition to all of the above, the student will be prohibited from participating in, or running for class office, Student Government Association representative or officer, leadership conferences, Governor's School, the Senior Hall of Fame, and other extracurricular activities.

The next piece of material culture was a letter to the East community regarding the Honor Code, informing them of its status, and how it was in draft form, and had to go before the Student Government Association (SGA), faculty, and PTA. The final draft was ready for implementation in September of 2000.

In order to determine the awareness of the East community regarding the Honor Code, one of the first pieces of data that needed to be collected had to answer the question: "How do students know about the existence of the Honor Code?". As part of the initiation to the library, all 9th grade students see a presentation by the two librarians. The core of their presentation is a PowerPoint™ slide show that helps students evaluate online research, and web sites. Thirty-one slides deal directly with the honor code, and how to properly cite sources to avoid plagiarism. For many students this was the first instance that they have experienced a direct discussion of the honor code, and it is put into context for them. The first time they actually see the honor code is in their student planners that are distributed during the first days of school. Each planner has a copy of the code in the front section, which gives school specific information before providing the planning pages, and every student receives one. Five years ago, 3' x 4' signs were placed in all classrooms that described the mission of the Honor Code, the consequences for violation of the code, and how the code should be indicated on assignments. A recount of the number of signs still present in classrooms revealed that out of 100 classrooms, only 38 still have the reminder signs of the code. Below is a table (Table 1)

that indicates the departments that have signs, how many rooms have signs, the total number of rooms within that department, and the percentage of the department's rooms that have signs.

Table 1: Survey of Honor Code Signs Present in Department Classrooms

Department	Number of Rooms with Honor Code Signs	Total Number of Rooms in the Department	Percentage of Rooms in the Department with Signs
Health and P. E.	1	5	20%
Arts	10	13	77%
World Languages	1	8	13%
Math	8	20	40%
Science	5	18	28%
Business	6	6	100%
Social Studies	3	14	21%
English	4	16	25%
Totals	38	100	38%

The Business department had all six of their signs posted in the six classrooms where departmental courses are taught. The Arts had a high percentage of rooms with signs. World Languages had the lowest percentage. Social Studies and English also had low numbers of signs present.

Staff Surveys

Surveys were distributed to staff and students to ascertain knowledge and feelings about the Honor Code. Staff members had seven questions to answer. Thirty-four responses were received. Responses are listed below (Table 2).

Table 2: Results for Question One of the Staff Survey

Question 1	What does the East Honor Code mean to you?
English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few students adhere • Code keeps them honest • I will not cheat • A standard of excellence

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectation of honor
World Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pledge to honor the rules • Seems silly to me • Supports teacher administratively • Shouldn't be about me, should be about students • Provides a way to address issue of cheating
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative course of action • No cheating • Very little • That a student swears not to cheat
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not much • Reinforces that students should not cheat (3) • Focuses on importance of not sharing information • It's cosmetic
Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative attempt to deal with dishonesty • Doesn't mean a lot • The school & students should have the strength of conviction that all students should do their own work • Don't think the students attach much meaning to it
Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It means holding students accountable for academic honesty • Provides specific guidelines for teachers & students in defining what constitutes academic dishonesty & what the consequences are for honor code violations
Fine Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students pledge to complete their own work without cheating
Ind. Tech.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance that most students will sign/abide by code
ISS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An invaluable tool to reinforce character development with the kids
Special Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all that much
Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only applies when 1 of my students is caught

Several responses gave the indication that students should be held accountable for their work, and that they complete it without cheating. There were a few responses from departments that suggest that the code might not mean a lot, and few students adhere to it. Since the staff has been in the school for various lengths of time, it was important to ascertain how they actually learned about the code the first time (Table 3).

Table 3: Results for Question Two of the Staff Survey

Question 2	How did you first find out about the honor code at High School East?
English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Found out that cheating situation is bad • From administration • Handbook • Teacher meetings
World Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explained when I 1st came to school • Orientation • Was here when it was implemented • Memo
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New teacher orientation • On a poster to hang in my room • Faculty meeting (2)
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty meeting • Handbook • 1st year in my mailbox • From the students • Colleagues • Memo
Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When I was hired • When I took position • A student had just been cited for cheating • Not sure • 1st day of teaching
Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration • In planning freshman orientation, we decided to include information about plagiarism and academic honesty.
Fine Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My first year at East
Ind. Tech.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students
ISS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saw it posted in the room.
Special Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher handbook
Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students & parents on the [Honor Code] committee

Answers to this particular question varied from learning about the code from Administration, to finding a poster about it in the classroom. No one mentioned that they had a meeting about the Honor Code. To determine if there is consistency within the

building regarding the indication by students that they have not violated the code,

Question 3 was asked of the staff for their methods (Table 4).

Table 4: Results for Question Three of the Staff Survey

Question 3	How do you have your students indicate that they have not violated the honor code?
English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a declaration of honesty at end of each test • I check randomly
World Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students must memorize code in French & sign it after writing it on assignment • I print it and they sign it • Signature on tests
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write code on assessments (3) • I don't have them indicate it
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give a wide variety of test versions • I remind them, students write code on tests (4) • I don't (2)
Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They write code on major projects/tests (3) • They must cite all sources for an assignment • Sometimes they must print internet sources that they use • I don't • I Google™ their papers • On major projects, I include a reminder that a violation will result in zero
Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Fine Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They sign an honor code form & we discuss it at start of course • At end of each project they reflect verbally & in writing about their progress so they must describe their own work
Ind. Tech.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students sign off on code
ISS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I call them on any inappropriate behaviors that break the code, refer to it by name and use it as a "teachable moment"
Special Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By stating it on the test & then signing it
Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

Three departments had teachers indicate that they do not have their students write the code on their assessments. Other teachers have them write it on tests and assessments. In the Fine Arts, the teachers have to reflect verbally and in writing about their own work, so it is difficult to cheat on that kind of assessment, as they are reporting

their own feelings and interpretations of the pieces they create. To determine if the discussion of the Honor Code occurs just once, or multiple times during a course, Question 4 asks staff members to indicate how often they discussed the code with their students, and why they were discussing the code (Table 5).

Table 5: Results for Question Four of the Staff Survey

Question 4	Last year how often (give an approximate number of times) did you discuss the honor code in class (List the number of times, and reason for discussion).
English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mention it before every test • Never discussed it • Once at beginning, once with research paper & 3-4 times periodically • About 5
World Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't even count on how many times • It's re-explained for assignments • Once • Twice (once to explain, once due to violations) • Twice (once to explain, once to remind them) • 3 (once when distributing class expectations) • Twice when discussing a major writing assessment done outside of class
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A dozen • Always before a lab was given • Many times when one class leaves a test & another will take the same one • A few times because students don't understand that telling someone what was on the test is "giving unauthorized aid."
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero • Once (2) • Twice • 3 times (in the beginning of the year when plagiarism was suspected) • 2-3 times due to a violation-once to explain it • Always with 1st test & several times throughout the year with lab reports
Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once • At least 3 times with each class (they had a library presentation on plagiarism followed by a discussion-discussed twice more after problems with an assignment) • Early in year w/all classes (respect yourself & be proud of

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> your own work-right or wrong) • 4-5 times
Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All freshman for orientation, • Remind classes to cite sources, • We have a presentation that included the Honor Code to each freshman English class & reinforced throughout year how they should integrate their research into properly cited papers.
Fine Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once or twice (during discussion of course expectations-before a quiz)
Ind. Tech.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the beginning of each test
ISS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-6 times (code violations)
Special Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-3 times (discussing responsibility & somebody in another class getting caught cheating)
Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

The data seemed to indicate that students are told about the code multiple times in each department. There were only two respondents who indicated that they never mention the code prior to a test or major assessment. Also, once an honor code violation happened in the class, or in another class of the teacher, the code was mentioned to students again. Table 6 shows the results of asking teachers what they should do if a violation occurs in their class one time, or more than once.

Table 6: Results for Question Five of the Staff Survey

Question 5	What do you think you are supposed to do if a student violates the honor code one time; more than once?
English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow school and department procedure, but reluctant to go too far (lawsuits) • Once-student gets "0" & I call home and guidance counselor & write an honor code violation • Once-"0" & warning, twice-failure
World Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once a warning, after that write up an honor code violation • Fill out warning card, once-student received zero with no reassessment-twice-all of above plus an honor code white card • Students who cheat get zero on assessment with no retake opportunities & honor code cards are written up
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give a zero & fill our an honor code violation • Report to Math Asst. Principal then grade level office • Depends on severity of violation-call home-talk with supervisor-talk to grade level

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once-call home & make them take new test-never experienced 2nd offense
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never happened • Give a zero • Give a zero & call parents • Write an honor code violation card & give them zero credit, • Write up violation-photocopy the work-give it to grade level-mark zero on work, • 1st time-conference w/student-2nd time-conference w/student & telephone conference w/parents-3rd time-zero on work & white card • Score zero-call parent-write up card.
Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report it • Each violation is sent down to grade level office • One time-zero on assignment-call parents-put info on file • Write a violation for each infraction
Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to administration • Should be dealt with very seriously & consequences should be more severe w/subsequent violations • Students should not have to be subjected to the public humiliation and profound loss suffered by Blaire Hornstein to learn how unacceptable plagiarism is.
Fine Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once-discuss w/student & fill out violation-twice-same as above, maybe request conference with asst. principal, parents.
Ind. Tech.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to grade level/guidance/parents
ISS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd chance-re-discuss & reinforce adherence • Emphasize that I value its tenets personally
Special Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero 1st time, lose credit after that
Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disciplinary action

Teachers in this area were not very consistent. If an honor code violation did occur with a teacher, then the penalties ranged from a warning to giving the student a zero on the assignment, and filing a honor code violation card in the grade level office. Some teachers involved their departmental supervisor as well. But all teachers indicated that there would be a recognition of the offense, and some sort of disciplinary action. If the teachers do in fact use the honor code, one needs to know if there are any complaints about the code in its current form (Table 7).

Table 7: Results for Question Six of the Staff Survey

Question 6	Do you have any complaints about the honor code as it stands now?
English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Totally ineffective • All teachers should use it • Too leniently enforced • No complaints • Students don't take it seriously
World Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No (3) • It's useless • Not sufficiently widespread
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What recourse do we have if a student forgets or refused to write & sign it • No complaints (2) • Don't think students take it seriously
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No complaints (5), • It's pointless • Too wordy
Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kids don't feel any fear of it • Not enforced by all teachers • Enforced inconsistently • No real consequences beyond zero
Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No complaints • Teachers & administration tend to back down when students are caught cheating
Fine Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The few times I have reported an honor code violation not much action was taken
Ind. Tech.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No complaints
ISS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No complaints
Special Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students don't take it seriously
Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to many students, it has not greatly impacted on cheating

Many teachers had no complaints about the code in its current form. The major complaint tended to be that teachers feel students don't take the code seriously, and it is not enforced consistently by all teachers, and the administration. Based upon these answers, teachers were then surveyed for their suggestions to improve the code, and make it more meaningful for them (Table 8).

Table 8: Results for Question Seven of the Staff Survey

Question 7	Do you have any suggestions to make the honor code more meaningful to East students?
English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wouldn't work at East • Should be enforced by all • Have it be part of student transcript • Counselors must help • Stress consequences
World Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be more uniform • Teachers should make students write it • No suggestions • Explain consequences of violation • It's hopeless
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss it at the Welcome Back to School assemblies & make the subject of cheating part of the curriculum • Drop it-expect them to be honest • Have teacher talk about implications of cheating • No suggestion
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No suggestions (3) • Emphasize that in college plagiarism is punished with expulsion-in industry = jail time • Sign a code for every assignment • I don't think it can be done • Decrease competitiveness & get students to focus more on learning
Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None • Follow through & more concrete consequences for violations • Remove privileges such as officer of student government (2) • AP students who violate code cannot take AP anymore • Letter should be attached to transcript
Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers should create assignments that require more than copy & paste • Honor code needs to be specific & should be enforced as consistently as possible
Fine Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students lose credit or partial credit-do community service
Ind. Tech.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No suggestions
ISS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No suggestions
Special Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lose credit if caught multiple times & put it on transcript
Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exams should change from year to year-teacher should routinely do computerized screenings for plagiarism

Many suggestions were offered by teachers ranging from more rigorous assignments in the classroom, to changing tests more frequently. Some thought that students should lose credit in the class, or have the violation appear somehow on the transcript. One teacher thought that if an AP student violated the code, they should not be allowed to take the class anymore. Ultimately changing the philosophy of the school by making it less competitive was offered by another teacher, to encourage students to focus more on learning, than the actual grade, thus reducing the drive to be dishonest.

Student Surveys

The staff survey gave much useful data regarding the code, and how it is implemented in their classrooms and departments. The next logical step was to turn to the students for their views on the code. None of the students were present in the school when it was implemented, and did not have one in place in their middle schools. So, their first experience of an honor code was at High School East. 10th-12th grade students were surveyed about the code, to ascertain what it means to them (Table 9).

Table 9: Results for Question One of the Student Survey

Grade	Question 1: What does the East Honor Code mean to you?
10 th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have been achieving my grades on my own without cheating • Not much (2) • Nothing to me • An oath that I will not cheat (17) • A couple of sentences • Respect, discipline, responsibility • It's a nuisance that takes time away from getting the exam started • The test is a measure of my own knowledge
11 th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheating is wrong • No cheating takes place (4) • Not much (2) • If you cheat, you break a code that results in punishment • You have to be honest with yourself and not cheat

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An annoying sentence that I have to write which doesn't affect my actions • You get into trouble when you cheat
12 th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Something we write to assure we won't cheat (2) • Absolutely nothing (2) • An edict that should be followed – to cheat is showing complete disrespect for the rule • A policy regarding truthfulness – cheating is not allowed • Nothing – people don't let that stop them • Pointless • It means to act honorably • I only think about it when my teachers make us write it on a test (2) • It means that I have not cheated and my teachers trust that if I write it, I'll follow it

Most of the students indicated that the Honor Code meant that they would not cheat on any tests or assignments, or that it meant that they should act with honor, or that when they write the pledge on a test, that it means they have not cheated. There were several responses though, that indicated that writing the code was pointless, or a waste of time, and delayed the start of the actual test. Knowing that the students receive an orientation to the honor code during orientation assemblies, and through a presentation by the librarians, the students were asked how they found out about the Honor Code present at the school (Table 10).

Table 10: Results for Question Two of the Student Survey

Grade	Question 2: How did you first find out about the honor code at High School East?
10 th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st day of freshman year teachers discussed importance of honesty (7) • My first English vocabulary test we had to write it (5) • On a test in one of my classes (8) • From an older friend when I was in 8th grade • From a program in the Library • My Intro to Business teacher made me write it on my work • An assembly in freshman year • Math teacher

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English teacher asked us to write it on a test • From my teachers
11 th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QPS freshman year • Freshman teachers (4) • Teachers (4) • Homework planner in freshman year • Laminated poster
12 th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From people talking about it • Freshman year assembly • Teachers (3) • Hanging on a classroom wall • QPS – (named teacher) • 1st day of school in many classes (4) • 1st vocabulary test freshman year • When I was accused of breaking it • Writing it on a test in freshman year

Almost all of the students indicated that they had learned about the code from either a freshman assembly, from the librarian presentations, or by their teachers in class. One student indicated that they heard about it after being accused of breaking it. Another student actually heard about it from an friend, while they were in 8th grade. It seems that 9th grade teachers stress the importance of being honest as was recorded by the 10th grade students. To determine consistency among teachers, students were asked as to how they are to indicate the code on their tests and assignments (Table 11).

Table 11: Results for Question Three of the Student Survey

Grade	Question 3: How are you supposed to indicate that you have not violated the honor code?
10 th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By writing it and signing it (21) • By not cheating (3) • With a word of honor and signature • By getting a grade you should really get and studying hard
11 th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because I didn't • By writing and signing it (7) • Personally I don't understand how writing it would prevent you from cheating • I don't think there is a way because if someone wants to cheat, he'll find a way

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By not cheating (2)
12 th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By not cheating • Writing on every test (9) • There is no way (3) • Citing sources – writing in your own words

Most of the students gave the answer of writing the code and signing their name as a way of indicating that they have not cheated on the test. Some students took a negative tone with this question, and gave responses suggesting that there is no way to indicate that you have not cheated, and if someone wants to cheat, they will find a way. One student said that by “getting a grade you really should get, and by studying hard”, thus not mentioning anything about the code itself. Students were then surveyed for their remembrance of how many times teachers discussed the code in their classes (Table 12), to see if departments are different in their mentioning of the code.

Table 12: Results for Question Four of the Student Survey

Grade	Question 4: Last year how often (give an approximate number of times) did your teachers discuss the honor code in class (List the class and number of times).
10 th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math – 12 times, English 5 times • Many times in French, less in other classes • Never discussed – was on board or they told us to write it (6) • World Civilizations H – 5 times, English H – 6 times, Spanish 2H – 4 times, Geometry A – 2 times, Health – 1 time, QPS H – 2 times • Once in English • 5 times-French, CPS-World Civilizations-English-CPS • Twice-English, History-once, CPS-twice, English • French-too much to count, World Civ-10, English-15, QPS-15, Math-20 • About 2 times in each class • English-several, World Civilizations-several, Math-0, Spanish-0, Science-0 • Almost every test we had to write it • English-10, Algebra-8, Spanish-4, History-4, History-4, CPS-8 • World Civ-20, Language-20, Spanish-10, Science-15, Math-2,

	<p>Health-10, Comp. Literacy-1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Geometry before each test we had to write it down • A discussion on the 1st and 3rd class • Once or twice per class • 1 to 3 times per teacher • Every test-all core classes • English-3, Science-0, Spanish-0, History-1, Math 3
11 th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every time we take a test • Once in Functions • Can't recall • Math-5 times • Never • Once in each class • Before every test and quiz • About 5 times • At least twice in every main class • Once in every class at beginning of year
12 th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once in each class • Only when superintendent came to school • For the 1st week of school freshman and sophomore year in all my classes • English many times, Biology 1H-before every lab/test • Biology 2A-once, Chemistry 1A-twice, Pre-Calculus H-0, US History 2A-twice, English 3A-once, Latin-8, Chemistry twice, Spanish-3, History-2, Algebra II-twice, English-3, Actor's Studio-0, Health-1 • English and Pre-Calculus every time a test was given • Once in the beginning of the year • Math-once, Science-5, English-3, Spanish-5 • English class approximately 40 times • History-twice, English-7, Chemistry-twice, Math-4 • Chemistry 1A-30, English 3A-5, US History 2A-5 • Don't remember • None

Answers were across the board for this question. Some teachers never mentioned the code to their students, to a maximum of 40 times for an English class. More standard of an answer was several times, or just prior to each test and quiz. One student in 12th grade seemed to think they only heard about the code when the superintendent was going to be visiting the school. Sometimes it was written on the board, and it was understood

by the students that they did not have to discuss it, but just write it down on their test. Only two students had the experience that they never discussed the code in their classes. Given the opportunity to reflect about the code, and describe any complaints, students were asked about their complaints regarding the code in its current form (Table 13).

Table 13: Results for Question Five of the Student Survey

Grade	Question 5: Do you have any complaints about the honor code as it stands now?
10 th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No complaints (17) • I don't think it works • It's ridiculous (2) • Takes away test time (2) • Don't like writing it on every test (2) • Should be enforced more strictly • Does not ensure no cheating
11 th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No complaints (9) • People don't follow it
12 th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No complaints (4) • It's pointless(2) • Does not prevent cheating (6) • Takes too long to write and serves no purpose • Students should take it more seriously

Most of the students had no complaints about the code. There were the negative complaints however, that the code is ridiculous, and writing it down wastes time, the code does not prevent cheating, and that people do not follow it. A few students thought that their peers should actually take the time to take it more seriously for what it stands for. Based on these complaints, students were then given the opportunity to make suggestions to help make the code more meaningful for their peers at East (Table 14).

Table 14: Results for Question Six of the Student Survey

Grade	Question 6: Do you have any suggestions to make the honor code more meaningful to East students?
10 th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No suggestions (15) • Teachers should make different tests at the same level

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers should discuss what happens if it is broken • Students should write down the full honor code, not just “I will not cheat” • Make more people understand it • It should be abolished • Should add in possible consequences of cheating • Consequences in high school and college should be discussed (2) • Teachers should prohibit anything on desk during a test • Add “I will defend the fact” to make it more meaningful
11 th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can it be printed on the paper so we don’t have to write it • Explain it more in depth
12 th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No suggestions (1) • It should be printed on paper so we don’t have to write it • Explain it in more depth • It’s useless because students will cheat anyway • Teachers should stress its importance more • Write the penalty for cheating along with the code • Teachers should tell of actual consequences that have happened from cheating • Stricter penalties (2) • Play the guilt card, make students feel “dirty” if they break the code • Just writing something down will not stop cheating • Follow through with threats made at them for cheating – teachers need to pay more attention to students when they are taking a test • There are ways to reduce cheating, but an honor code is not good. If students are going to cheat, signing a code that is false is probably not such a big deal, especially if it is required. If not, then nobody will write the code anyway. The only way to reduce cheating is having tough consequences – nobody really cares about the honor code

This question drew a number of responses from students. Some were quite simple, such as writing the code on the test for the students, so they could just sign it. Some students wanted to put more on the teachers in terms of explaining the code and the consequences (both in high school and in college) of violations. Still others wanted teachers to pay more attention during tests, by watching more carefully, following through when a violation does occur, and using different versions of the tests, so that

students would be discouraged from discussing the tests with their peers. One student wanted the teachers to make students feel guilty or “dirty” for violating the code. The suggestion made to students was to write the entire code out rather than “I did not cheat”.

Focus Groups

A focus group of 21 parents was assembled to gain insight into their ideas about the honor code, and what they think it means to the school and their students. The parents were also asked for meaningful feedback to help make the code more meaningful for East students (Table 15).

Table 15: Parent Responses to the Parent Focus Group Questions

Question 1: What is your awareness of the honor code at High School East?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information from teachers that was sent home • Stories from their own students or other students visiting their home
Question 2: What would you like your son or daughter to learn/know/understand about the honor code?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn proper citation of literature, to avoid issues of plagiarism • Seriousness of consequences • The true meaning of honor
Question 3: What changes would you suggest be made regarding the current honor code?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other schools should be studied to see if what we are doing is comparable • Work on consequence awareness to reduce violation occurrences • More discussion of why/how students should/can act honorably (Character Education Issues; Word of the Week) • For lab courses, detailed instructions of whether students can work together in groups or they should work individually (Changes from middle school [teams] to high school [individual]) • The code awareness training should take place every year, and should be reinforced in small group discussions • Reinforce with teachers that the code should be applied consistently across courses and departments • Seniors should be made aware of the seriousness of the consequences (calls to colleges – may lose acceptance; revoking of any school distributed scholarships)
Question 4: How should students indicate that they have followed the honor code?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should write out the whole code, not just “I didn’t cheat” • Code should be written on tests
Question 5: Have you discussed the honor code with your child? If so, in what context?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, based upon the stories that come home about cheating incidents in their

<p>classes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, the frustration factor of getting a “C” with honor while seeing classmates cheat to get an “A” • Yes, kids think they won’t be caught
<p>Question 6: What ideas do you have for motivating East students to be interested in the code?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce emphasis on tests • Have more assignments with student writing that cannot be downloaded from the internet • Indicate violations on report cards somehow • Parents should model honorable behavior at home • “Leak” the data on the number of reported violations to students so they know that people do get caught, and receive consequences

The parents provided many useful suggestions as to how to help their students understand the Honor Code, as well as finding it more meaningful. Some of the ideas were immediately put down by the principal as being inappropriate. Training every year in small group discussions, along with a large group session would probably be useful for these students and teachers to remind them of the importance of the code. A focus group was convened of staff members to gather their responses about the Honor Code (Table 16).

Table 16: Staff Responses to the Staff Focus Group Questions

<p>Question 1: How should the students and parents learn about the code?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send a letter home at the beginning of the year • Post the code and consequences online • Make it part of the assembly program for the 8th grade students • Mention the code during opening of school assemblies • Teachers could mention it during Back to School Night • Have violators talk in front of students
<p>Question 2: Should this training/information session occur annually?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many people said YES • Not only annually, but periodically in all classes • The letter should go out every year • Could just be a letter that is signed at the beginning of the year for each class, then is kept on file
<p>Question 3: What are some changes to the code that could enhance the meaning of it for students?</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many staff felt that the code should not be written down for each assignment, as the meaning for the students is lost • Several suggested that the students sign that they will be honorable in their academic behavior at the start of the year in each class, and these are kept by the teacher • Signs in classroom with a short catch-phrase on it to remind teachers and students of the Honor Code • Teachers should still be vigilant about checking for violations during tests, and assignments (checking internet sources)
<p>Question 4: What should the punishment be for those who violate the honor code?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st time offender receives warning • Zero on assignment with no make-up or reassessment • Whatever the consequence, there should be consistency among the staff in its implementation
<p>Question 5: When should the honor code apply in the classroom (should specific items be spelled out)?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not on homework • Tests • Labs • Everything unless specific instructions regarding collaboration are given by the teachers • It should be up to the teacher in the classroom • Anything requiring research in books or online
<p>Question 6: How should the students indicate that they have followed the code on specific pieces of work?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could be listed on the assignment and the student could just sign it • Wouldn't need to do it if the initial letter is used at the beginning of the year

The staff members were very divided in their views about the Honor Code. Some staff members thought that the Code was not meaningful for the students and that it should be scrapped. Others thought the signing of the code on each assignment was a waste of time, and was unnecessary. Several staff had the idea to do as some other schools do, and have the students indicate that they will act with honor by having them and their parents sign a letter agreeing that at all times the student will act with honor. The final group to be convened was the student focus groups. Several small group sessions were held with students to gauge their feelings and ideas about how to make the code more meaningful for themselves and their classmates (Table 17).

Table 17: Student Responses to the Student Focus Group Questions

<p>Question 1: How could we enhance the meaning of the code for East students?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not important unless you get caught • Define plagiarism each year • Could make students write a reflection paper about acting with honor • Sign a paper at the beginning of the year instead of each time • It is a good concept, but people cheat anyway • Teachers should pay more attention to violations, and if more students are caught, the word will get out about how people are serious
<p>Question 2: How/When should students indicate that they are in compliance with the code?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once at the start of the year • Pre-type the Code and have the student sign it • NOT EVERY TIME • Commitment ceremony as is done in some colleges
<p>Question 3: What could teachers and administrators do to make the code more effective?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several people said to make students and teachers aware of the penalties • Educate students more about what cheating is • Have more enforcement by teachers • Be consistent in distribution of penalties • Students should be trusted more
<p>Question 4: How should the discipline punishments change for those students found guilty of an Honor Code Violation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't know what the penalties are now • There is an Honor Code Violation White Card? • Several students said that teachers need to be consistent in their application of punishments • Some teachers do not punish for the first offense while others do • Don't take violations off of the student record • Listen to all sides of the story from those caught cheating • The giver of aid, and the taker of the aid should be punished differently
<p>Question 5: What should the training look like for the students to have a better understanding of the code?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Librarian training followed up by individual teacher discussions • Need an assembly each year to start the year • Don't need an assembly • Have signs in classrooms that encourage students to act with honor • Have a "Beware" kind of sign to remind students to act with honor • Have public figures that have to act with honor in their jobs to speak at opening assemblies • Teachers should have their own training to ensure consistency • Training should have clear definitions of cheating, and what constitutes cheating • Teachers should discuss plagiarism and proper internet citation in their courses

Question 6: On what kind of assessments should students indicate compliance with the code and why?

- Tests
- Major Projects
- Shouldn't write it down each time
- Just do it once at the beginning of the year
- It is meaningless in that students will sign the code and cheat anyway
- Students get lazy and have a "who cares" attitude

Responses from the students were equally indicting of themselves and the teachers for who is at fault for why the Honor Code is not held as something meaningful for the school. They had reasonable suggestions for how to fix the Code, and restore the meaning for the code. Most of their ideas centered around awareness for the ways students could be in violation of the Code, and that teachers become more consistent in their enforcement of penalties.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions, Implications, and Further Study

Conclusions and Implications

The Honor Code is in trouble at Cherry Hill East due to several factors:

- Student feeling that it is meaningless, in that, students will sign any piece of paper, and still cheat anyway.
- Inconsistent enforcement by teachers (some are more strict than others, and either don't write up the first violation or they do).
- Students do not feel that it is important to sign the Honor Code each time they take a test, or turn in an assignment.
- Students are not adequately informed about the consequences of violating the Honor Code.
- Training sessions are good during the 9th grade year, but are inconsistent after that.
- The posting of signs in all classrooms has fallen off since the initial application of the signs 5 years ago.
- The initial push for the Honor Code has slowed, and needs to be revitalized.

Based upon these ideas that came through the various surveys and focus groups the following recommendations are suggested to make the code more meaningful for students and, clearer for teachers and administrators:

1. Take down current Honor Code signs posted in classrooms, and put up new signs in classrooms and in the main entrance area, that indicate "East Students Act with Honor Always".
2. The 9th grade library orientation program should continue, and maintain the discussion of the Honor Code and plagiarism.

3. Teachers should spend time at the beginning of the year discussing the way the Honor Code applies in their class. When it is appropriate, teachers should also discuss with students, what types of collaborative behavior are allowed for specific assignments.
4. Proper citation skills should be taught in the Science, English, and Social Studies classes so that when students have to write papers or labs, citations are done properly.
5. Department meeting time should be devoted to working with teachers to help them help their students avoid Honor Code issues, as well as working on their lessons to ensure that instruction in the classroom is meaningful, and appropriate.
6. In the first day envelope for teachers, there should be a separate letter/memo reminding teachers about the code, and the procedures for handling a violation in their classroom.
7. Students should not have to write out the Honor Code on all assignments, as is currently done. At the beginning of the year, students and parents should sign a paper that describes the Code, how/when it applies, as well as the consequences of violations. Teachers would hold these papers for the year, and if there is a violation, the papers can serve as a talking point prior to the discipline taking place.

This Study and the ISLLC Standards

The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996) were written by representatives from states and professional associations in a partnership with the National Policy Board for Educational Administration in 1994-95, supported by grants from the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Danforth Foundation. The standards were published by the Council of Chief State School Officers, copyright © 1996.

ISLLC Standard 1 states: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation and stewardship of a vision that is shared and communicated by the school community. For this project the intern had to know about systems, research

methods, communication, negotiating and consensus building. The intern had to believe in, value, and be committed to high expectations for teaching and learning, staff development, continuous improvement, reflective practice, and successful adult-building. Once the changes are made to the High School East Honor Code, there should be a shared vision that shapes the Honor Code program. Throughout this study, stakeholders have had the opportunity to share the vision and the responsibility towards achieving the vision of revitalizing the Honor Code.

ISLLC Standard 2 states: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth. In this project the administrator would have to know about student growth and development, effective teaching principles, the change process. During the study, the intern had to be aware of measurement, assessment and evaluation strategies. The administrator also must be committed to creating a safe and supportive learning environment, and use the Honor Code as a teachable moment when a student has a violation. One of the important tenants of the Code is to make sure that all persons involved are treated with dignity and respect. All of the individuals that are part of a situation are to feel valued and important. This would include any students, teaching staff, administrators, and parents. Even though the school has high expectations for student learning and performance, that is no excuse for students to engage in dishonest behavior. The program was allowed to go on for five years before it was evaluated, the new version should be evaluated on a more regular basis to be sure that it is continuing to meet the needs of staff and students.

ISLLC Standard 3 states: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment. For this study, the administrator should be committed to management decisions for the enhancement of teaching and learning. They also have to take risks and accept responsibility for school improvement, while involving and trusting stakeholders in decision making. The administrators at High School East will need to make sure there is a research base for decision making, so that stakeholders are included in the shared decision making, if changes are to be made to the Code in the future.

ISLLC Standard 4 states: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources. Through the development of partnerships and collaboration with the community (including parents and businesses), more meaning might be felt by students for the Honor Code. The community and families can provide resources for the enhancement of learning at home when the parents talk to their students about honor, and they model honorable behaviors at home. If the parents cheat on their taxes, or in any way glorify the accomplishments of those who have cheated, this sends the wrong message to the student. Throughout this project, diverse community members and stakeholders were sought out for their thoughts and opinions as to the East Honor Code.

ISLLC Standard 5 states: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness and in an ethical manner. Acting ethically is one of the major pillars of the Honor Code. It is the job of

the staff and administration to help ensure that students are equipped with the techniques necessary to engage in ethical decision making while understanding the responsibilities and consequences of deviating from ethical behavior. School administrators must model personal and professional ethical behavior as they are public figures that are very visible to the students they serve. When faced with a violation, the administrator must act with fairness and apply punishments fairly. This was one concern of students who wanted there to be differences between punishments of violators to the code. It is up to the administrator to be willing to sort through the details to make fair decisions.

ISLLC Standard 6 states: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural context. The administrator has an awareness of issues and forces that affect teaching and learning, especially in a competitive high school such as High School East. Recognizing that education is the key to opportunity and social mobility, the administrator must be sure that everyone is acting honorably while they strive to achieve those goals. The administrator must also be sure that there is continuing dialogue between the stakeholders and decision makers regarding the Code. There should be a school environment that focuses on students and learning while maintaining collaborative communication among all stakeholders in an ethical environment.

Changes to the Organization

By surveying various stakeholders within the school, the intern found that people started talking about the honor code more. Students were eager to participate in the Focus Groups, and share their opinions, in the hope that change would occur. The high-

achieving students wanted to see change the most, as they were discouraged that their peers cheat and get away with it, and because they do, their grades are higher than those of their non-cheating classmates. Typically lower achieving students did not observe as much cheating in their classes (hardly any), but felt that writing the code was an extreme waste of their time, and did not mean anything to them.

The parents also were eager to discuss the Honor Code, and how it affects their children. Parents reported that their children were highly upset when they would see classmates cheating or plagiarizing to get ahead, and their child felt the pressure to keep up conflicting with their own decision to act honorably. Parents felt that more consistency among staff members about enforcement might deter some students from acting dishonorably.

Staff members also felt strongly about the code, and had several suggestions for change, while making the administration of the Code easier for them, and perhaps more meaningful for the students. Staff seemed to be mixed in terms of whether it was important for the students to write the code down each time they took a test.

Needed Further Study

The work that is described here should be examined in the future to make sure that the recommendations (if enacted) are followed. The only way for the Honor Code to survive at High School East is for there to be buy-in on the part of teachers and students. Surveys should be taken after implementation to determine if the training sessions and discussions for students and teachers were successful. Also, continuous monitoring of the teachers and students for their feelings about the Honor Code should be conducted to make sure that it continues to work for the stakeholders.

Conclusions

There seems to be that the competition for good grades has caused some students to engage in behaviors that are not honest (Niels, n.d.). They see people in society do it with no consequences, and feel that they must also to keep up. It used to be done out of necessity with strong feelings of guilt, but today there is very little guilt shown by the students (Bushweller, 1999). Students sometimes are unclear about the definition of cheating in terms of assignments. Students surveyed by McCabe et al. (1999) indicated that assignments should not be looked upon as items that can be cheated on, because if students work together, they are learning, it doesn't matter how they are learning (collaboratively). If students feel the assignment is a waste of their time, then they will tend to cheat just to get it done (McCabe et al., 1999; Bushweller, 1999; Niels, 2003).

Having an Honor Code at High School East is not meant to solve a cheating problem. It is meant to instill honorable behaviors in our young people that they can carry with them for the rest of their lives. Research has shown that in colleges that have Honor Codes typically see a reduction in the amount of dishonest behavior (McCabe and Treviño, 1993), so we might actually have less cheating at High School East due to the presence of the Code. Implementing the recommendations put forward in this study should go a long way towards reestablishing the importance of the Code at High School East, and giving teachers the talking points necessary to help students develop life-long honorable behaviors.

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Appendix A
Survey Instrumentation

Honor Code Survey for Teachers

As part of my master's program in Educational Administration, I am working on several projects that hopefully will benefit High School East. One of these projects involves the honor code that has been in place for several years. The purpose of this survey is to gauge your feelings and level of awareness about the honor code at East. The survey is completely anonymous. Department information is used for coding purposes only. Thank you for your participation in this study. You are under no obligation to complete this survey. Please return this survey to my mailbox by September 15th, 2004.

Department: _____

Please give your response to the following questions:

1. What does the East Honor Code mean to you?
2. How did you first find out about the honor code at High School East?
3. How do you have your students indicate that they have not violated the honor code?
4. Last year how often (give an approximate number of times) did you discuss the honor code in class (List the number of times, and reason for discussion).
5. What are think you are supposed to do if a student violates the honor code one time; more than once?
6. Do you have any complaints about the honor code as it stands now?
7. Do you have any suggestions to make the honor code more meaningful to East students?

Once the results of this survey have been compiled some teachers may be selected to be part of a focus group to react to the research findings, and this may lead to a revision of the code.

Thank you for participating in this survey.

Appendix B
Focus Group Instrumentation

Focus Group Questions for Students

1. How could we enhance the meaning of the code for East students?
2. How/When should students indicate that they are in compliance with the code?
3. What could teachers and administrators do to make the code more effective?
4. How should the discipline punishments change for those students found guilty of an Honor Code Violation?
5. What should the training look like for the students to have a better understanding of the code?
6. On what kind of assessments should students indicate compliance with the code and why?

Focus Group Questions for East Parents

1. What is your awareness of the honor code at High School East?
2. What would you like your son or daughter to learn/know/understand about honor codes?
3. What changes would you suggest be made regarding the current honor code?
4. How should students indicate that they have followed the honor code?
5. Have you discussed the honor code with your child? If so, in what context?
6. What ideas do you have for motivating East students to be interested in the code?

Focus Group Questions for East Staff Members

1. How should the students and parents learn about the code?
2. Should this training/information session occur annually?
3. What are some changes to the code that could enhance the meaning of it for students?
4. What should the punishment be for those who violate the honor code?
5. When should the honor code apply in the classroom (should specific items be spelled out)?
6. How should the students indicate that they have followed the code on specific pieces of work?