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## Positive Education at The Shipley School

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### Abstract

Positive education, a unique blend of academic learning and positive psychology theory on well-being, is becoming increasingly important in today's educational system, as mental disorders like anxiety and depression continue to increase in schools. Located in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, The Shipley School, an independent PK-12 school, is an early adopter of positive education. In August 2017, Shipley led a three-day positive psychology retreat for all of its colleagues (teachers and staff); 25 self-selected colleagues, known as trained trainers, received an additional two days of training to guide them towards becoming thought leaders at Shipley. Preliminary evidence suggests that student's perceptions of their teachers' well-being may be associated with student well-being at Shipley. Additionally, the positive psychology retreat seems to have enhanced positive relationships among colleagues while decreasing loneliness and negative emotions. Per colleague feedback, active constructive responding, gratitude, mindfulness, optimism/thinking traps, and strengths appear to be the most salient skills taught at the retreat. As a result, we have developed onboarding plan recommendations for new colleagues encompassing the teaching of these five skills in small-group settings led by the trained trainers. We believe that Shipley is well on its way to becoming a leading model for positive education.

### Keywords

positive education, positive psychology, well-being, trained trainers

### Disciplines

Education | Psychology

Positive Education at The Shipley School

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University of Pennsylvania

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Service Learning Project  
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## **Introduction**

The Shipley School is an independent, tuition-based coeducational day school for pre-kindergarten through 12th grade students with a mission to provide educational excellence and instill in each student a love of learning and a desire to compassionately participate in the world. Located in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, Shipley is an early adopter of positive education in which its defining culture bridges that of academics and well-being together as informed by positive psychology research. Sharron Russell, our service learning liaison and Shipley's Director of Positive Education, notes that Shipley is in a hugely competitive and saturated market. With 10 other co-educational independent schools within only a 5-mile radius of Shipley's campus, and several other single-sex schools nearby as well, Shipley's niche lies in its double helix of rigor and support. Indeed, parents choose Shipley for its strength in providing this support piece of individualized and quality care to its students (S. Russell, personal communication, January 26, 2018).

This document serves as a foundation for Shipley's continued, comprehensive movement into positive education, covering: A) an overview of positive education, B) a situation and data analysis of Shipley's strengths and needs, C) a literature review of relevant topic areas specific to the context of Shipley and positive education, D) a recommended application plan for Shipley, and E) relevant assessment practices for Shipley's ongoing positive education initiatives.

## **Positive Education**

Through a situation analysis of The Shipley School and a literature review and analysis of the education sector as it relates to positive psychology, we developed an understanding of the value and importance of effective positive education implementation. Positive education is a unique approach to education that complements academic learning with positive psychology

theory (Bott et. al., 2017). Positive psychology is the scientific study of the conditions and processes that lead to human flourishing on multiple levels, including the biological, personal, relational, institutional, cultural, and global dimensions of life (Seligman, 2000). Based on these guiding principles, positive education emphasizes the nurturing of strengths and motivation to promote well-being (Chen & Mcnamee, 2011). The result is a blend of academic learning and character and well-being development, ultimately providing students with well-rounded life skills. The Shipley School has embraced positive education as a guiding education framework.

Positive education is becoming increasingly important in today's education system. Mental illness, such as depression and anxiety, have noticeably increased within schools (Kern, 2017). Nearly one in five children experience a major depressive episode before graduating from high school. Fortunately, early positive education research has demonstrated positive effects on not only student well-being, but also increased academic performance, improved social functioning, and mitigation of depressive symptoms (Bott et. al., 2017). The relationship between well-being and academic achievement is further highlighted in a meta-analysis of 213 studies involving over 270,000 students from kindergarten through high school (Waters, Sun, Rusk, Cotton, & Arch, 2017). The analysis shows that, on average, students enrolled in a social and emotional learning program scored 11% higher on achievement tests compared to other students (Waters et al., 2017). Excitingly, The Shipley School has been dedicating finite resources to its own social, emotional, and ethical development (SEED) program for over 20 years.

### **Positive Education at the Shipley School**

In addition to Shipley's aforementioned SEED program, Shipley's continued investment in positive education development includes its recent staff training. In August 2017, Shipley led

a three-day positive psychology retreat for its colleagues (henceforth referring to both teachers and staff) to increase well-being and teach key elements of positive psychology (S. Russell, personal communication, January 26, 2018). Moreover, 25 self-selected colleagues received an additional two days of training and are on their way to becoming positive psychology thought leaders at the school. Clearly, Shipley has already invested heavily in positive education practices, though significant opportunity areas remain. To capitalize on these opportunity areas, Shipley is hiring an associate director of positive education to develop future trainings and teach positive psychology as an elective course to upperclassmen (S. Russell, personal communication, January 26, 2018). This additional investment will provide much needed, dedicated support to embed positive psychology within Shipley, which Shipley has noted as a key challenge. Specifically, Shipley wants colleagues to see positive psychology as an integral and permanent part of the school's culture, rather than a temporary initiative.

### **Shipley's Positive Education Data**

The following sections cover analytical highlights of existing data related to Shipley's positive education efforts that has recently started to be collected and measured. We utilized insights from this data to guide our literature review, action plan, and measurement plan.

#### **Analysis of Shipley's 2017 Positive Psychology Retreat**

Prior to the positive psychology training retreat for Shipley colleagues in August 2017, Shipley collected colleague well-being data through a pre-survey. The data included scores on a ten-point scale of the five elements of Seligman's (2011) PERMA model, Positive Emotions (P), Engagement (E), Relationships (R), Meaning (M), and Achievement (A), in addition to other well-being related data such as negative emotions, loneliness, health, and overall well-being.

Four months after the retreat, the colleagues completed the same survey again. A comparison of the two data sets (see figure 1 and figure 2 in Appendix B) shows that the retreat had a positive effect on Relationships (R). The colleagues' relationship scores increased from 7.39 before the retreat to 7.61 afterwards. Additionally, the colleagues' loneliness scores decreased from 2.80 to 2.59. Although there was no increase in Positive Emotions (P), negative emotions dropped from 3.14 to 2.87. These survey results provide initial supporting data on the training effects for colleagues at Shipley and insights into where to focus future training opportunities.

In addition to the quantitative data, we were able to draw insights from colleagues' qualitative feedback regarding the training content, specifically in regards to the question: *What did you learn at the retreat that you will apply/have applied to working at Shipley?* According to the results, out of the eight skills deliberately taught at the retreat, active constructive responding (ACR), mindfulness, gratitude, optimism/thinking traps, and strengths received the most positive feedback from colleagues (see figures 3 and 4 in Appendix B). In addition, many colleagues mentioned topics specifically related to improved relationships, including responses like "we are more similar than different," "in the present listening," and "others matter." In the analysis, we bucketed these types of responses into a separate 'other relationships' category. This fits with the evidence of positive impact on relationships in the post-retreat well-being survey. According to input from the facilitators and feedback from the trained colleagues, the cohort (small group) learning and sharing sessions at the retreat contributed to this enhancement of the relationships element of well-being (A. Adler & Y. Biggins, personal communication, March 9, 2018).

### **Relationship between Teacher Well-being and Student Well-being**

An additional analysis focuses on the results of two questions added to Shipley's students' annual well-being survey that has been distributed since November 2016 as suggested

by Martin Seligman, the founder of Positive Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania who has advised Shipley in this endeavor. The purpose was to measure the influence of teachers' well-being on students' well-being by asking students to rate the following two items: Q1) My teachers seem to be motivated, energetic, and positive about teaching, and Q2) I receive encouraging, supportive feedback about my work. Students in grades six through twelve responded to the questions in 2016 and again in 2017. We were able to track data for 407 students (77% of the available students' data) across the two years (see Appendix C for details). Results show that, on average, scores from Q1 and Q2 both increased slightly in the year 2017; Q1 increased by 1.8% and Q2 increased by 1.5%. However, the changes vary significantly by grades, making it necessary to segment the analysis by grade level. It is also worth noting that this data can and should serve as the baseline for longer-term measurements of student and colleague well-being. We believe this data can, and should, serve as a preliminary baseline for Shipley's longer-term measurements of student and colleague well-being. However, we suggest Shipley use the internal complete data set (with a trackable student index) to recalculate the analysis for better accuracy moving forward. See Appendix C for complete results.

Within the same surveys, students also answered questions from the EPOCH Measure of Adolescent Well-being, which assesses five positive characteristics in youth, including: (E) Engagement, (P) Perseverance, (O) Optimism, (C) Connectedness, and (H) Happiness (Kern, Benson, Steinberg, & Steinberg, 2016). Each EPOCH component can be defined as follows: 1) Engagement refers to absorption, involvement, and interest in life's activities, 2) Perseverance involves the capacity to achieve one's goals in spite of obstacles, 3) Optimism means having hope for and confidence in the future, 4) Connectedness refers to having satisfying relationships

and friendships in which one feels cared for, loved, esteemed, valued, and supported, 5) Happiness involves feeling content with life and experiencing regular states of positive moods.

To analyze the relationship between teachers' well-being and students' well-being, we calculated correlations between the two added questions and the EPOCH ratings. For Q1, grades 7, 8, and 12 showed moderate correlations with some of EPOCH's elements, indicating that students' perception of their teachers' well-being seems to be positively correlated with student well-being in some cases. Q2 shows even stronger correlations with the EPOCH elements, suggesting that students' perceptions of their teachers' positive interactions are also positively correlated with students' well-being levels at Shipley in some grades. See Appendix C for complete results. It is important to note that correlation is not the same as causation, and we do not currently have evidence to suggest that the causal direction is from teachers' well-being to students' well-being.

### **Literature Review**

Based on our situational and data analysis of the Shipley School, we believe there is an opportunity to further embed positive education at Shipley through a curated onboarding program for new colleagues, in addition to the creation of an ongoing and sustainable training program. Accordingly, we focused our literature review on four primary topics: A) positive education exemplars, B) positive education outcomes, C) teacher trainings, buy-in, and motivations, and D) high-quality connections within organizations.

#### **Positive Education Exemplar: Geelong Grammar School**

Geelong Grammar School (GGS) in Australia was the first school to train its entire staff in positive psychology principles (Norrish, 2015). The school's objective was to scale the positive education program school-wide to make its long-term vision of improved well-being a

reality. Between 2008 and 2009, 220 GGS staff were trained by trainers from the University of Pennsylvania in either 6- or 9-day courses. In 2011, 25 staff were further trained to become trainers in the school (Norrish, 2015). These trainers now run a 4-day course in positive education every year for new staff (Bott et al., 2017). As a result of GGS's continued positive education onboarding and training efforts, the well-being levels of both staff and students at GGS have continued to increase, now higher than the national average (Vella-Brodrick, Rickard, Hattie, Cross, & Chin, 2015; Quinlan, Swain, Cameron, & Vella-Brodrick, 2014; Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkins, 2009).

GGS's implementation plan entails four processes: "learn it," "live it," "teach it," and "embed it" (Bott et al., 2017). As this same model has been adopted by Shipley to track the expansion of positive education throughout the school, it is worth breaking down the four components further.

- ***Learn it:*** GGS requires that all new staff complete a 4-day introductory course in positive education prior to commencing their employment. Existing staff also receive the equivalent of a one-day training each year to enhance their knowledge and skills in positive psychology (Bott et al., 2017).
- ***Teach it:*** There are two ways of teaching positive psychology in GGS: explicit teaching and implicit teaching. Explicitly, GGS provides positive education classes for 5th to 10th grade students and encourages them to reflect on meaningful concepts in their lives (Bott et al., 2017). Implicitly, GGS has integrated positive psychology into the subject curricula.

- *Live it:* At GGS, staff who have been trained in positive education are encouraged and supported to take regular action to nurture their own well-being, especially since they serve as role models for much of the day for their students (Norrish, 2015).
- *Embed it:* In addition to the regular trainings and curriculum updates, GGS launched a positive institution project specifically aimed to create positive cultural changes in the work environment for school staff (Norrish, 2015).

### **Positive Education Outcomes**

Academics and well-being, while sometimes considered antagonistic within a school day of limited hours, have been shown to work synergistically. Grit, a character strength centered on passion and persistence, can out predict IQ in terms of effect on academic performance (Bott et al., 2017; Duckworth & Seligman, 2005). Fortunately, character strengths and well-being can be improved over time with proper teaching and deliberate practice (Niemi, 2017). While the elements of well-being themselves are critically important and are worthy of focus, they are also linked to other important life factors, including school performance (Bott et al., 2017; Slade, Oades, & Jarden, 2017), future income (Diener et al., 2002), and physical health (Diener et al., 2017). This highlights the ability for Shipley's positive education program to drive a variety of positive outcomes for its students over their lifetimes.

While positive education is a relatively new concept, education systems in the UK, Australia, Bhutan, and others around the world have adopted a positive education framework. In Mexico, fifteen months after adopting a comprehensive well-being program, 35 well-being focused schools had children with both higher well-being and significantly higher standardized test scores than control schools (Bott et al., 2017). The success drivers seemed to be increased perseverance, engagement, and connectedness, as measured through the EPOCH scale. In Peru, a

Penn program taught 28 Peruvian trainers how to implement a well-being curriculum. These trainers in turn taught the curriculum to 590 local trainers who cascaded the learnings to principals and teachers from 694 schools with over 690,000 students. The well-being curriculum improved academic performance fifteen months later (Bott et al., 2017). This initiative demonstrates the potential effectiveness of cascaded training, in addition to the ability to drive well-being and academic performance at scale. The teacher training itself is important, as noted by the research: the perceived value of the program by the students was tied to the teachers' ability to deliver positive education lessons (Bott et al., 2017). Investing early in a few positive education trainers at Shipley can cascade to a significant impact for the organization.

Lea Waters (2011) separately reviewed 12 positive education interventions designed to foster well-being in schools. The results of the studies demonstrate that positive psychology interventions in schools are significantly related to both well-being and academic performance. Moreover, the research highlights a common factor of the 12 programs – the importance for positive interventions to be implemented by teachers, as this benefits their existing ongoing relationships with their students and their ability to reinforce the lessons outside of the curriculum itself (Waters, 2011). This relationship between well-being and academic achievement is echoed in a meta-analysis of 213 studies involving over 270,000 students from kindergarten through high school (Waters, Sun, Rusk, Cotton, & Arch, 2017). The analysis shows that, on average, students enrolled in a social and emotional learning program scored 11% higher on achievement tests compared to other students (Waters et al., 2017). In Australia, a similar program resulted in improvement in academic performance equal to an extra six months of school, and in the United States, a study found that life satisfaction and positive affect predicted improved GPA one year later (Waters et al., 2017).

Not only can positive psychology drive increased well-being and academic achievement for students, but it also has the ability to positively impact students' mental health. A comprehensive meta-analysis of 51 positive psychology interventions conducted by Lyubomirsky (2009) showed significant well-being enhancement ( $r = 0.29$ ) and decreased depressive symptoms ( $r = 0.31$ ) from positive interventions. The Penn resiliency program (PRP) focuses on increasing students' ability to handle daily stressors by promoting optimism and developing assertiveness, creative brainstorming, and other coping and problem-solving skills. A meta-analysis of 15 PRP studies demonstrates reductions of depressive symptoms at all follow-up assessments, up to 12 months later (Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkins, 2009). It is important to acknowledge that Shipley's efforts in positive education programming has the potential to not only help its students flourish, but to improve their mental health as well.

Early positive education research has demonstrated positive effects on student well-being, increased academic performance, improved social functioning, and mitigation of depressive symptoms (Bott et. al., 2017). Two specific design features of positive education studies that show promise include the implementation of positive interventions by teachers and infusing positive psychology skills into the already established school subjects (Waters, 2011).

### **Faculty Training, Buy-in, and Motivation**

Effective implementation of teacher training programs relies on teachers' understanding of new theories and practices (Thoonen, Slegers, Oort, Peetsma, & Geijsel, 2011). However, teachers do not always have positive perceptions of new initiatives and changes which often prevents them from further exploration and implementation (Leithwood, Steinbach, & Jantzi, 2002). This is something that we heard from our liaison Sharron as being the case for some colleagues at Shipley in relation to positive education. Therefore, teacher buy-in and motivation

are important determinants in the receptivity towards new school programs, including positive education programming (Datnow & Castellano, 2000; Fullan, 2000). In order to cultivate teacher buy-in at Shipley, we recommend the school use a data-driven approach to create an effective positive psychology onboarding program for new colleagues.

There has been a growing body of literature showing that data-driven implementation of programs may provide better learning opportunities for teachers (Jennings, 2012; Levin & Datnow, 2012). Teachers tend to believe in, and implement, what they have previously learned from prior experience rather than learning from new initiatives (Kerr et al., 2006). To achieve quality implementation, obtaining teachers' buy-in and support through providing credible information based on actual data is critical to achieving the program's objectives (Feuerborn & Chinn, 2012). This data-driven approach can cultivate buy-in for new programs as it can help elucidate the daily needs and challenges that classroom teachers experience (Yoon, 2016).

Another major factor of teacher buy-in is motivation, impacting teachers' professional learning and capacity to improve their teaching (Coburn, 2003). Teacher motivation is comprised of three components: expectancy, value, and affect (Peetsma, Hascher, van der Veen, & Roede, 2005; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990).

- ***Expectancy*** refers to teachers' self-efficacy. When teachers strongly believe in their capabilities to achieve a desired result, they become more engaged in professional learning activities. To achieve this, it will be important to help teachers learn and feel comfortable with the positive education materials and research.
- ***Value*** refers to internalizing school goals into personal goals (Peetsma et al., 1990). In a study of a transformative leadership teacher training program, the more that teachers were able to internalize the program's goals, the more engaged they became in

professional learning activities and the more they kept themselves up to date as a result (Thoonen et al., 2011). Internalization of school goals into personal goals can be facilitated through collaborative activities and participative decision-making. These tactics can help develop teachers' tolerance for uncertain situations, and in turn, lead to a greater engagement in professional learning activities (Thoonen et al., 2011).

- *Affect* refers to positive feelings and emotions which teachers derive mainly from their tolerance of uncertainty (Peetsma et al., 1990). Teachers who are more certain tend to be more flexible in their approaches. A study confirms that intellectual stimulation appears to impact both teacher affect (tolerance for uncertainty) and value (internalization of school goals into personal goals) components of teacher motivation indirectly via teacher collaboration and trust (Thoonen et al., 2011). The more school leaders encourage teachers to reflect on their assumptions, beliefs, and values, the more teachers perceive a climate of trust and the more they are willing to collaborate. This ultimately results in increased motivation for professional learning and commitment to implementing the content into teaching practices.

In practice, changes demand commitment from teachers, who may or may not agree with the reform idea (Fullan, 2002). Without teachers' commitment, it is unlikely that teacher training programs will come to fruition (Silin & Schwartz, 2003). Therefore, when creating an onboarding plan for Shipley, it is crucial to consider teachers' buy-in and motivation, and how these factors shape the extent to which training programs can be properly and effectively implemented.

### **High Quality Connections**

A key factor to facilitating organizational change is building and nurturing high-quality connections (HQCs) that feature mutual positive regard, trust, and active engagement on both sides (Dutton, 2003). According to Dutton (2003), HQCs enable colleagues to feel more open to ideas, competent, and alive towards changes to be implemented. Furthermore, HQCs increase work engagement, job satisfaction, employee attachment, resilience, provide more access to emotional and instrumental resources, and facilitate learning, creativity, adaptivity, cooperation, and coordination within and across teams (Stephens, Heaphy & Dutton, 2011). With regards to well-being, HQCs improve physical and psychological health and foster vitality and positive emotions in individuals who experience them on a daily basis (Dutton, 2003).

According to Monica Worline (personal communication, March 3, 2018) and Dutton (2003), there are four primary pathways for building HQCs within organizations: 1) Respectful engagement: engaging the other in a way that sends a message of value and worth; 2) task enabling: helping in another person's successful performance; 3) trusting: conveying belief in the other person that they will meet our expectations and that they are dependable; and 4) playing: creating dynamics between people that engage them together in mutuality towards growth. Examples of each of these pathways are provided in Appendix D. Worline (personal communication, March 3, 2018) recommends finding ways to marry these interventions to already established roles, routines, and policies within organizations so as to create lasting change. As much as positive education development at Shipley can be tied into existing workstreams and routines, the higher the likelihood for adoption and sustainability.

Even small positive psychology practices can have a big impact at Shipley. In a burnout study with nurses, marrying the interventions of mindful breathing and self-compassion with the

routine of shift report change resulted in a huge spike in nurse quality of life six months later as well as some enhanced patient satisfaction scores as well (M. Worline, personal communication, March 3, 2018). This demonstrates the impact that one tweak in organizational structure and day-to-day practices can have on colleague well-being.

Combining these pathways with routines can help cultivate positive meaning, positive relationships, and positive emotions, three conditions research suggests are central to healthy organizations (M. Worline, personal communication, March 3, 2018). Given that these three engines of positive emotions, positive relationships, and positive meaning interplay with one another, unlocking one of these assets can provide the momentum to unlock the other assets as well. Pre/post data analysis of Shipley's retreat indicates that the retreat successfully enhanced positive relationships. Worline (personal communication, March 3, 2018) suggests targeting whichever engine already has momentum within the organization to continue to create more change; thus, we suggest that Shipley build off of its success in deepening colleague relationships and continue focusing on building HQCs among colleagues, old and new.

### **Action Plan**

#### **Objective & Approach**

Based on the situation analysis, data analysis, and literature review, our cohort developed a curated onboarding plan for new colleagues, in addition to recommendations related to ongoing training opportunities. The objective of the onboarding plan is to empower new colleagues with an introductory course on positive psychology and to further enable the embedding process of positive education throughout Shipley. As part of the onboarding plan, we recommend that Shipley dedicate additional resources on the train the trainers model and provide them with the

information and skills to deliver the onboarding experience itself. These trainers have the opportunity to develop an even deeper understanding of positive psychology and disseminate the information to all colleagues at a regular cadence. Empowering the trainers in this way will not only create a more effective onboarding program, but will also enable a more sustainable and embedded culture of positive education at Shipley.

Holistically, the onboarding plan recommendations are based on an in-depth positive education literature review, analysis of pre/post quantitative data collected from the 2017 retreat, and qualitative data obtained from interviews with Sharron Russell (Shipley's Director of Positive Education), Shipley colleagues, and Alejandro Adler (Director of International Education at the Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania) who led the first positive psychology training at Shipley and remains involved in Shipley's positive education programming. We believe that this type of data-driven approach is critical for Shipley's success.

### **Onboarding Program Recommendations**

Fortunately, Shipley has already benefited from the creation of an extremely comprehensive manual covering the positive psychology topics mentioned above in the analysis section, in addition to other relevant aspects of positive psychology. As a result, we focused primarily on *how* to best utilize the existing material as opposed to creating additional content. Accordingly, we prioritized the following research-based recommendations (note: Appendix E has a checklist to enable easy reference and actioning of the onboarding plan).

1. Continue to focus first and foremost on colleague well-being as it has been shown to be critical for the success of positive education implementation (Waters, 2011). In previous, successful positive education implementations, the perceived value of the program by the students was tied to the teachers' ability to deliver positive education lessons (Bott et al.,

2017). Moreover, colleague well-being is essential for the success of positive organizations; colleagues with higher engagement and better relationships report greater job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Kern, Waters, Adler, & White, 2014). Finally, initial Shipley well-being data suggests that teachers' well-being levels are positively correlated with students' well-being.

2. Focus on the five positive psychology topic areas (ACR, mindfulness, gratitude, optimism/thinking traps, and strengths) that had the highest positive impact from the 2017 positive psychology retreat (see Appendix B for supporting data). As the onboarding program will likely only be one day, compared to three for the retreat, it will be most effective to focus on these top topic areas, with plans to introduce the other topic areas at a later point via the trained trainers (see below).
3. Double down on Shipley's train the trainers program. Fidelity of delivery is a key factor to successfully applying and implementing positive psychology within an organization (Seligman, 2011). The trained trainers will benefit from enhanced professional knowledge of positive psychology, and in combination with their first-hand knowledge of Shipley, will be empowered to successfully disseminate positive education principles to other colleagues. In Peru, a Penn program managed by Alejandro Adler taught 28 Peruvian trainers how to implement a well-being curriculum. These trainers in turn taught the curriculum to 590 local trainers who cascaded the learnings to principals and teachers from 694 schools with over 690,000 students. The well-being curriculum improved academic performance fifteen months later (Bott et al., 2017), demonstrating the potential effectiveness of a train the trainers model, even at a significantly larger scale.

4. Emphasize relationship skills among the new colleagues. The survey data shows that the colleagues' relationships were positively influenced by the retreat, an important contributor to overall well-being (Seligman, 2011). Although the new colleagues will not experience a full retreat, utilizing small group interactions has the potential to enhance their collaboration and trust (Thoonen et al., 2011). This enhanced collaboration and trust is likely to lead to motivation for continued professional and personal learning, in addition to more commitment to applying the training content into teaching practices (Thoonen et al., 2011). See Appendix D for additional detailed recommendations on relationship development.

In addition to these core recommendations, we have included two additional suggestions that have the potential to improve the onboarding program impact and expand the reach beyond new colleagues and toward a more sustainable development of positive education at Shipley:

1. Ongoing training for existing colleagues to maintain and further develop their positive education skillset. Adding another day of additional training for all colleagues, or having regular programming led by the trained trainers, will allow for further development of colleagues' positive psychology knowledge base. This would also facilitate additional connection opportunities between all colleagues within the positive education context.
2. Extending the onboarding program to three days so that other topic areas such as growth mindset, smart goals, and intrinsic motivation can be covered in addition to going deeper into the top five topic areas and forming stronger colleague connections from the onset. In talking with Sharron, we realize this may not be feasible from the onset. However, findings discussed in the literature review indicate that intellectual stimulation motivates teachers to internalize school goals into personal goals, specifically through enhanced

collaboration and trust (Thoonen et al., 2011). By providing colleagues with more time to reflect on their assumptions, beliefs, and values with regards to positive education, they would be more likely to perceive a climate of trust and be more willing to collaborate with Shipley's leaders. This implementation would likely result in increased motivation for professional learning and greater commitment to implementing positive education content into their daily lives and teaching practices. GGS has found success with this type of training, in which the trained trainers offer a 4-day course in positive education every year for new staff (Bott et al., 2017).

3. We also believe a significant amount of value can be derived from a similar program for parents. Although not the primary focus of this action plan, we have included details on the value of parent education in terms of student well-being in Appendix F to jumpstart planning in this realm.

### **Empowering Trainers to Enhance Colleague Connections**

Discussions with Sharron, Alejandro, and Yvonne Biggins (one of the trainers at Shipley's retreat) suggest that the small group sessions at the retreat provided the most value to Shipley colleagues (personal communications, March 9 & 13, 2018). Indeed, the qualitative feedback from the survey shows that the small group interactions within the retreat facilitated closer connections and reflective discussions among the colleagues, enabling more personal understanding of one another. As such, we recommend that Shipley's next step in advancing positive education and colleague well-being focuses on high-quality connections (HQCs), subjectively positive interactions between individuals, starting with the trained trainers (Dutton, 2003). Adopting a focus on HQCs expands on the retreat's success and strength of building

relationships and fits in nicely with Shipley's commitment to community (Sharron, personal communication, January 26, 2018).

Dutton (2003) emphasizes that organizational commitment and active investment in the personal development and growth of colleagues is an important aspect of developing HQCs. As Shipley is already equipped with a group of trained trainers in positive psychology who are excited for continued professional development (S. Russell, personal communication, January 26, 2018), we recommend that Shipley create conditions for these individuals to continually expand their personal growth and HQCs with one another and with new colleagues. Starting with the trained trainers would be ideal in that organizational change tends to be most adhesive when fueled by individuals with the most energy in the system (M. Worline, personal communication, March 3, 2018).

Accordingly, we recommend allocating the trained trainers a regular time and space to hold positive psychology related meetings, starting in the 2018-19 school year. Not only would this provide ample connecting opportunities for trained trainers through which they could continue growing and learning together in their shared passion of positive psychology, but these meetings could additionally be used for the development of their plans for the new colleague training in August and enhance their sense of agency. Adler (personal communication, March 9, 2018) specifically mentioned that the Beechwood House would be the ideal space on Shipley's campus for ongoing trained trainer meetings as it is more separate from the rest of campus and in view of nature. Indeed, Dutton (2003) emphasizes that it is vital to get the physical setting right so as to minimize status difference and encourage openness among colleagues. Implementation of regular meetings would pave the way for trained trainers to engage in HQCs on a routine basis and empower them to more fully own their roles as thought leaders in the school.

We also recommend asking the trained trainers if they would be open to matching with new colleagues to serve as mentors, or go-to people for support and questions, throughout the year. Dutton (2003) emphasizes that the time in which new colleagues come into contact with an organization is particularly important, as this is when they are most open to learning about the organization and when organizational messages are most powerful. Thus, it is important that Shipley's value of community and focus on positive education be apparent from the onset.

Indeed, research indicates that the socialization process for welcoming new colleagues is critical for establishing HQCs and suggests the following practices: 1) putting specific individuals in charge of helping new colleagues connect; 2) having people without a formal obligation for socialization invest time in welcoming new members; and 3) ensuring that the process of connecting is continually carried out (Dutton, 2003). Since the trained-trainers would ideally have both the time and commitment to invest in positive education (A. Adler, personal communication, March 9, 2018), we recommend that they facilitate social opportunities throughout the year.

### **Onboarding Program Logistics**

Today, new colleague onboarding consists primarily of a half day orientation that includes smaller group breakouts with supervisors (S. Russell, personal communication, March 13, 2018). As mentioned, we recommend an extended onboarding session centered on the top five positive psychology topic areas with a focus on smaller group breakout sessions. Ideally, new colleagues will be encouraged to carefully review the materials sent to them beforehand that include an array of introductory well-being content (A. Adler & Y. Biggins, personal communication, March 9, 2018). We also recommend sharing the complete Shipley well-being manual from the August 2017 retreat, which is approximately 20% theoretical and 80% activity

based, with new colleagues a few weeks prior to onboarding (A. Adler, personal communication, March 9, 2018). This will give the new colleagues a chance to familiarize themselves with positive psychology theory, thus paving the way for more effective and experiential trainings. At the actual training itself, we recommend providing new colleagues and facilitators with condensed versions of the respective manuals.

As new colleagues acquaint themselves with this material, we advise that they take the VIA strengths survey (Niemiec, 2017) and share their results with the trainers prior to onboarding if they feel comfortable doing so. This will enable the trainers to keep the new colleagues' top strengths in mind when planning, preparing for, and facilitating the new colleague training and also help form an inclusive language that provides a common identity for colleagues (Dutton, 2003). Research shows that focusing on clients' strengths prior to meeting with them is linked with several positive outcomes, including a stronger practitioner-client relationship, a higher use of strengths during the session, and more experiences of mastery and accomplishment (Niemiec, 2017). Moreover, character strengths provide a common language to discuss positive psychology on an ongoing basis for new and existing colleagues.

Meanwhile, the trained trainers, in addition to any other positive psychology leaders expected to lead the onboarding programming should be preparing for the facilitation and delivery of the onboarding material, as content delivery and facilitation technique are more important for establishing HQCs than the actual content being taught itself (Y. Biggins, personal communication, March 9, 2018). See Appendix E for an onboarding plan checklist to aid in this process.

**Sustainability**

We believe that a new onboarding program and empowered trained-trainers will help Shipley create a sustainable positive education culture. In addition to ongoing trainings, to assist Shipley in achieving its vision of creating a sustainable, impactful positive education program, we recommend a continued focus on collecting and analyzing the data from the well-being positive psychology related surveys. These should include measures of the effectiveness of the training programs, to continue to improve the program and share results (Thoonen et al., 2011). Establishing an ongoing scientific research evaluation methodology will not only contribute to more successful implementation of positive education, but also give Shipley the opportunity to give back to the scientific community. Refer to Appendix A for a proposed measurement plan.

**Conclusion**

Academics and well-being, while sometimes considered antagonistic within a school day of limited hours, have been shown to work synergistically. Character strengths and well-being can be improved over time with proper teaching and deliberate practice (Niemic, 2017). While the elements of well-being and character development themselves are critically important and are worthy of focus alone, they are also linked to other important life factors, including school performance (Bott et al., 2017; Slade, Oades, & Jarden, 2017), future income (Diener et al., 2002), mental health (Lyubomirsky, 2009), and physical health (Diener et al., 2017).

Early research specifically regarding positive education has demonstrated positive effects on student well-being, increased academic performance, improved social functioning, and mitigation of depressive symptoms (Bott et al., 2017). Lea Waters (2011) separately reviewed 12 positive education interventions designed to foster well-being in schools. The results of the studies demonstrate yet again that positive psychology interventions in schools are related to

both well-being and academic performance. We firmly believe that a data-driven new colleague onboarding process, in addition to regular positive education programming led by empowered trainers, will help Shipley along its journey towards becoming a leading model for positive education.

## Appendix

### Appendix A: Measurement Plan

Like all aspects of positive psychology, we recommend putting a framework in place to empirically analyze the success of the onboarding plan to maximize impact. Measuring the impact of the onboarding plan will 1) help us understand the impact on both colleagues and students; 2) help us improve the plan over time based on empirical evidence; and 3) share the research externally to report on the effectiveness of the program.

We recommend keeping the existing measures implemented by Shipley in place so that all new data can be compared to existing, baseline data. Shipley is currently using the following measurement mechanisms: 1) the PERMA Workplace Profiler measuring colleague well-being (Seligman, 2011). This questionnaire also includes two additional items: “I am motivated, energetic, and positive about my job at Shipley” and “I receive encouraging, supportive feedback about my work;” 2) the pre/post retreat survey evaluation; and 3) a student wellness survey that includes two newly added items: “My teachers seem to be motivated, energetic, and positive about teaching” and “I receive encouraging, supportive feedback about my work.” *Note: we are not including the questionnaire content here because Shipley already has the questionnaires.*

We suggest having new colleagues take the same retreat evaluation during the summer (before onboarding begins), at the end of their onboarding training to gauge immediate impact, and again at the end of the school year to gauge long term impact (to be repeated every year). This will enable measurement of the improvement in both new colleague well-being and positive psychology knowledge and application ability. However, we suggest that the format of this survey be altered so that the following two questions are collected quantitatively rather than qualitatively: 1) “What did you learn at the retreat that you will apply/have applied to your

personal life?” and 2) “What did you learn at the retreat that you will apply/have applied to working at Shipley?” The end result may look something like this: “What did you learn at the retreat that you will apply/have applied to your personal life?” a) Active constructive responding, b) Mindfulness, c) Gratitude, d) Strengths, e) Optimism/thinking traps, f) Relationship skills, g) Other, h) if other, fill in the blank \_\_\_\_\_. Formatting the retreat questionnaire in this way will make it easier and faster to code and analyze the colleague responses moving forward.

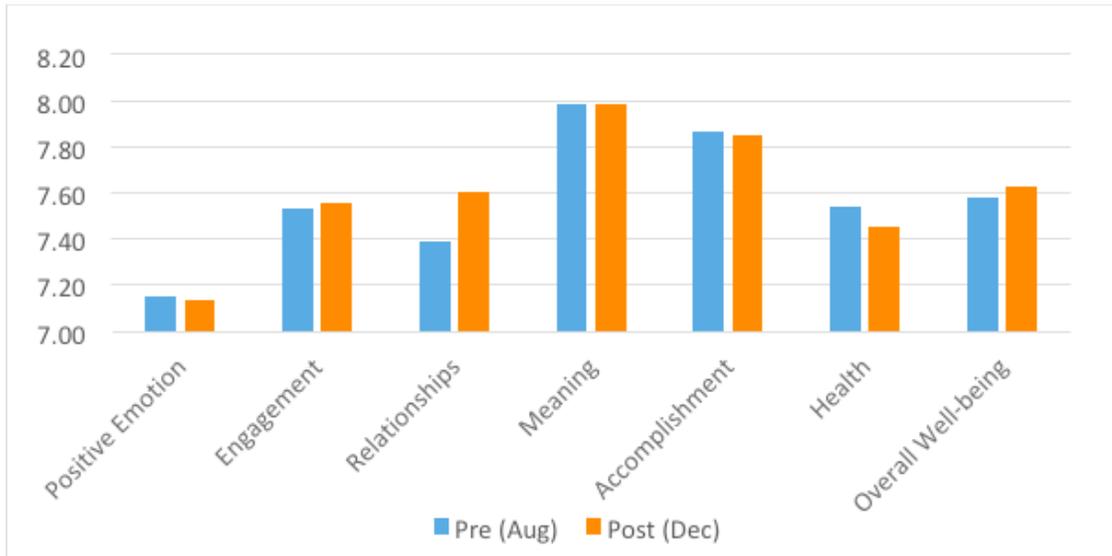
Toward informing the program along the way, we also suggest adding questions that address specific activities conducted in the training, i.e. which activities they enjoyed the most, to enable structured improvement. Moreover, we recommend that the new colleagues rate each facilitator on various items, i.e. “the trainer explained the material well.” This will help the trainers in their professional development while also giving Shipley a better understanding of which areas their trainers are strong in, and which areas may require further development.

After the new colleague training, we recommend having mentors follow-up with new colleagues via email and asking if they have any further questions or want more information on any of the material. We also recommend that the facilitators debrief with one another after the training and go over what worked and what didn’t work. Some helpful ways to measure if the training went well would be to obtain new colleague feedback after the training and observe how engaged they seem during the process and how connected they seem to those they experienced the training with. It would also be helpful to get feedback from the facilitators themselves in terms of how comfortable they felt with the material, how they thought the onboarding process went, and if the training enhanced their understanding of positive psychology even further. Given this, and feedback from Yvonne (personal communication, March 9, 2018), who facilitated at the August 2017 retreat for Shipley as well, the way in which content is delivered

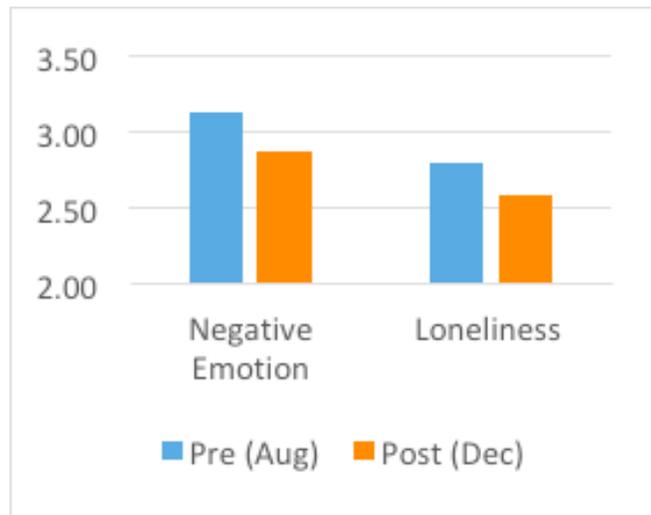
and that facilitation is carried out is likely more important for establishing high-quality connections than the actual content being taught itself. Virginia Miller (personal communication, April 17, 2018), another facilitator at Shipley's 2017 retreat, also emphasizes that facilitator familiarity with and belief in the material at hand is equally important in establishing HQCs among colleagues and in motivating colleagues to internalize positive education material. Indeed, colleagues who are more motivated for professional learning, like Shipley's trainers, tend to be more committed to implementing content into their professional lives (Thoonen et al., 2011).

In terms of student data, we recommend that Shipley continue to send the student wellness survey out every year, matching the student data with the relevant teacher data to allow for strong conclusions to be made with regards to how teacher well-being impacts student well-being. Based on student feedback, there is also an opportunity to improve the specificity of the student wellness survey. Student written feedback indicates that some students were confused about whether the questions were referring to how they felt at school or how they felt at home. Some students specified that their home lives were very different than their school lives.

**Appendix B: Pre/Post Retreat Survey Responses, Shipley Colleagues (PERMA)**

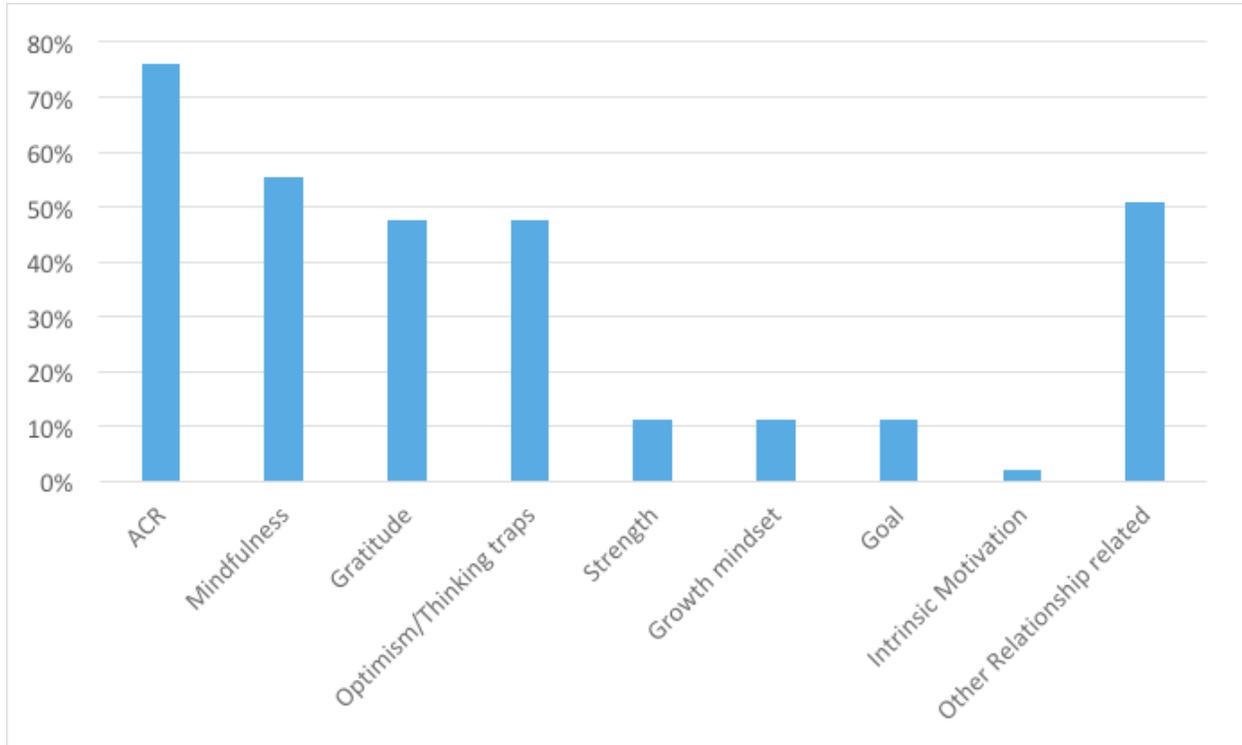


**Figure 1: Shipley colleague well-being level (Positive variables)**



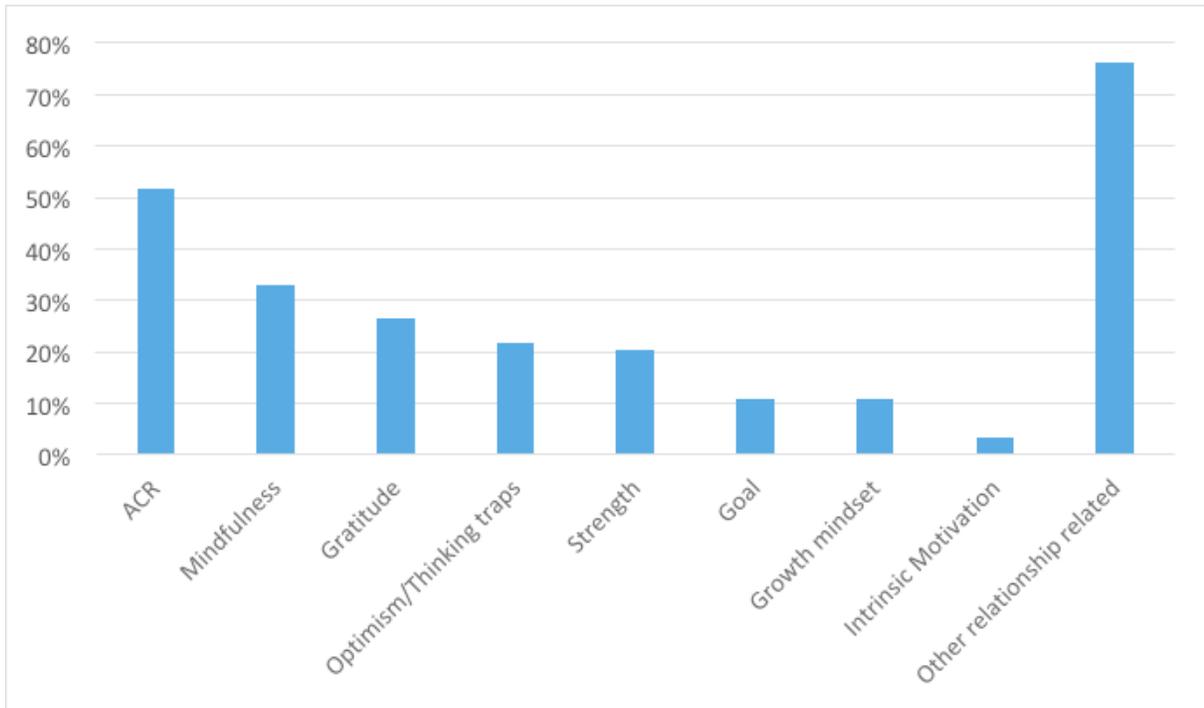
**Figure 2: Shipley colleague well-being level (Negative variables)**

Due to time constraints, we selected 63 colleague responses as a sample population for analysis out of 192 total colleague responses and coded the responses based on keywords.



**Figure 3: Colleague’s categorized responses to “What did you learn at the retreat that you will apply/have applied to your personal life?”**

Figure 3 shows the categorized responses to “*What did you learn at the retreat that you will apply/have applied to your personal life?*” Active constructive responding (ACR), mindfulness, gratitude, and optimism/thinking traps received the most positive feedback from colleagues in terms of applying the material to their personal lives.



**Figure 4: Colleague’s categorized responses to “What did you learn at the retreat that you will apply/have applied to working at Shipley?”**

Figure 4 shows the categorized responses to “*What did you learn at the retreat that you will apply/have applied to working at Shipley?*” The results are similar to those in figure 3, with ACR, Mindfulness, Gratitude, Optimism/Thinking traps and Strengths receiving the most positive feedback from colleagues in terms of applying the material within Shipley.

**Content Analysis of Question Responses (n=63):**

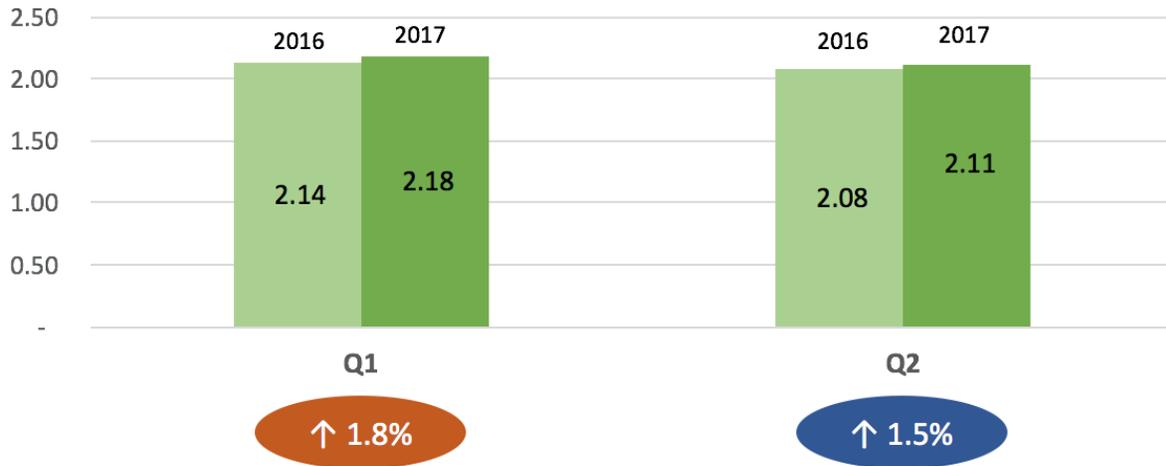
**Answers to Question 1:** *“What did you learn at the retreat that you will apply/have applied to your personal life?”* See figure 3 above.

Key word or Key information	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5	Total	Percentage to sample size
ACR	19	13	6	1	2	41	65%
Mindfulness	10	6	6	3	0	25	40%
Gratitude	6	6	8	2	3	25	40%
Optimism/Thinking traps	3	11	5	3	4	26	41%
Strength	0	4	0	3	0	7	11%
Growth mindset	0	2	2	0	1	5	8%
Goal	1	0	3	2	1	7	11%
Intrinsic Motivation	0	1	1	0	0	1	2%
Other Relationship related	12	9	13	6	1	32	51%

**Answers to Question 2:** “*What did you learn at the retreat that you will apply/have applied to working at Shipley?*” See figure 4 above.

Key words or Key information	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	Total	Percentage to sample size
ACR	15	12	3	2	1	33	52%
Mindfulness	5	8	5	2	1	21	33%
Gratitude	1	6	6	3	1	17	27%
Optimism/Thinking traps	6	2	5	0	1	14	22%
Strength	5	5	3	0	0	13	20%
Goal	1	4	0	1	1	7	11%
Growth mindset	1	1	4	0	1	7	11%
Intrinsic Motivation	0	0	2	0	0	2	3%
Other relationship related	21	8	7	8	4	48	76%

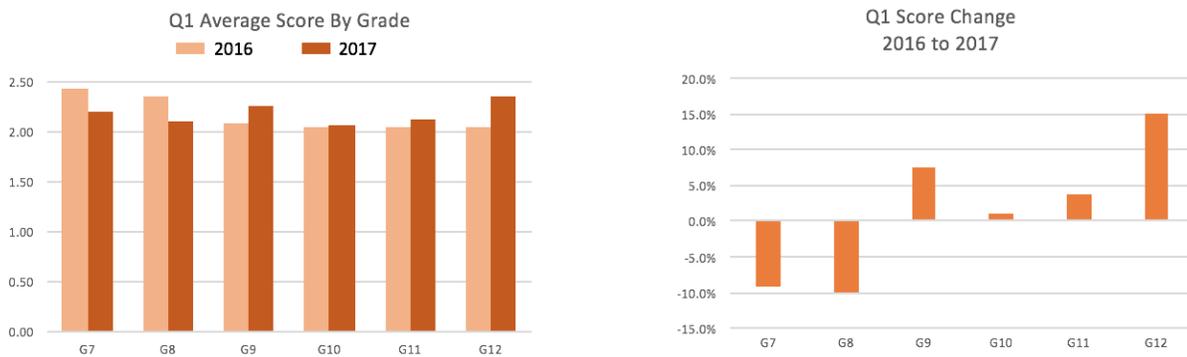
**Appendix C: Student Well-being Data**



**Figure 1. Average scores in 2016 and 2017 for the two questions below (n = 407).**

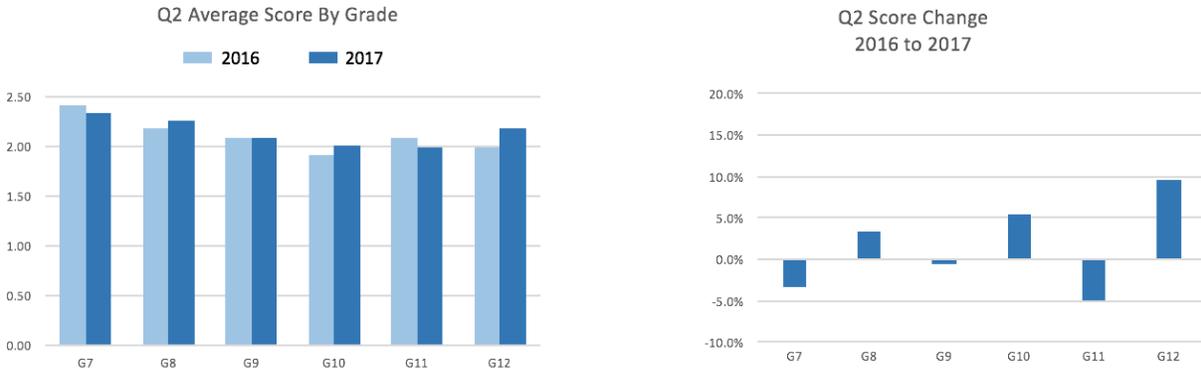
*Q1: My teachers seem to be motivated, energetic, and positive about teaching.*

*Q2: I receive encouraging, supportive feedback about my work.*



**Figure 2. Q1 Average score & change percentage by grade level.**

*Q1: My teachers seem to be motivated, energetic, and positive about teaching.*



**Figure 3. Q2 Average score & change percentage by grade level.**

*Q2: I receive encouraging, supportive feedback about my work.*

r	G7	G8	G9	G10	G11	G12
<b>Connectedness</b>	<b>0.41</b>	0.10	0.14	0.13	0.24	<b>0.36</b>
<b>Perseverance</b>	0.26	<b>0.30</b>	0.22	0.09	0.02	0.19
<b>Engagement</b>	0.27	0.17	0.16	0.04	0.13	0.16
<b>Optimism</b>	0.27	0.29	0.17	0.09	0.13	0.12
<b>Happiness</b>	<b>0.43</b>	0.24	0.10	0.24	0.19	0.06

**Table 1. correlation between Q1 and EPOCH**

*Q1: My teachers seem to be motivated, energetic, and positive about teaching.*

r	G7	G8	G9	G10	G11	G12
Connectedness	0.58	0.21	0.16	0.18	0.07	0.43
Perseverance	0.30	0.36	0.39	0.18	0.00	0.28
Engagement	0.50	0.00	0.19	0.14	0.15	0.41
Optimism	0.49	0.31	0.33	0.24	0.10	0.28
Happiness	0.60	0.30	0.22	0.21	0.15	0.33

**Table 2. correlation between Q2 and EPOCH**

*Q2: I receive encouraging, supportive feedback about my work.*

For data consistency and accuracy, students who took only one survey were not included in this analysis. Thus, 60 students in grade 6, newly enrolled students, students who graduated or left the school, and students who only took one survey for any other reason were exempt from this analysis. In addition, as the data only includes students' first names in the index, we didn't involve a few students who couldn't be traced by their first names successfully, including students with the same first names but different numbers in the two years (e.g. 3 Julia in 2016, but 2 Julia in 2017) and other mismatched names that could not be judged as the same person (e.g. Dill and Dillon).

### **Appendix D: Strategies for Relationship Development**

Examples of how to employ the four pathways of organizational change discussed in the literature review section under HQCs are provided here: 1) Respectful engagement: make presence a priority, withhold judgment, and give others the benefit of the doubt; 2) Task enabling: deliberately focus energy on teaching, helping, nurturing, and accommodating fellow colleagues; 3) Trusting: consistently work to seek input, share resources, use inclusive language, and be open with colleagues; 4) intentionally foster a culture of fun, design mini games to foster desired dynamics, encourage fun, light-hearted competition, make time for storytelling and playful connections (Dutton, 2003).

Respectful engagement between co-workers creates a sense of social dignity that confirms self-worth and efficacy and enhances teacher motivation and buy-in. Five strategies that schools can employ to enhance respectful engagement among colleagues include: *conveying presence*, *being genuine*, *communicating affirmation*, *effective listening*, and *supportive communication*. Dutton (2003) explains that: *conveying presence* involves focusing sacred attention on others, *being genuine* means signaling care for others, *communicating affirmation* entails acknowledging the positive core of others, *effective listening* requires being responsive and blocking out distractions, and *supportive communication* maintains expression of views while minimizing defensiveness, threats or negative comparisons (Dutton & Spreitzer, 2014).

### **Appendix E: Action Plan Checklist**

- Alter post-retreat survey questions so they are more quantifiable
- Add questions to post-retreat survey that will allow for structured improvement of future trainings & onboardings
- Add questions to post-retreat survey for new colleagues to evaluate facilitators of onboarding
- For onboarding new colleagues:
  - Have new colleagues take the PERMA workplace profiler with the additional two questions before and after onboarding
  - Have new colleagues take the post-retreat survey after onboarding
  - Establish HQCs even using subtle language over emails
  - Email out a syllabus that lists and explains pre-onboarding readings as well as instructions to take the VIA character strengths assessment
  - Work to incorporate HQCs, ACR, gratitude, and strengths language in interactions with new colleagues from the onset
  - Have assigned mentors follow up with new colleagues post-onboarding via email asking if they have any questions on the positive psychology material
  - Have facilitators debrief onboarding with each other and other trainers, provide feedback on how comfortable they felt with the material, what they got out of facilitating, what worked well, what didn't work well, and what has room for improvement
  - Have trainers organize a social event for new colleagues where they can meet other trainers and Shipley colleagues

- Empower the trainers – establish a regular meeting time for the trained trainers to ideally take place in the Beechwood House
  - During these meetings, we recommend:
    - Assigning trainers roles based on strengths/interests; option for trainers to apply for certain positions
    - Establishing an agenda for the meetings based on each topic to be learned
    - Reviewing the five topic areas to be covered at onboarding with the trainers & revisiting the research on these topics from the existing manual
      - Have trainers practice these skill sets
    - Hold a specific meeting to review HQC research with the trainers; this will help the trainers better connect with new colleagues at onboarding
    - Train trainers in facilitation skills and have them work on scripts and role playing for the onboarding and ongoing training sessions
    - Select 2-3 trainers to facilitate onboarding (dependent on volume of new colleagues)
    - Ask which trainers are interested in serving as mentors for new colleagues and match according to shared interests
      - If new colleagues feel comfortable sharing their VIA character strengths results with trainers before onboarding, share the results with their assigned mentors
    - Have trainers plan out logistics of onboarding:
      - Create a schedule, including specific activities (can adopt from the retreat with a focus on the top five topic areas)

- Write the script and finalize the timetable
- Created a condensed version of the respective training manual for new colleagues that only includes the top five topic areas
- Create a facilitator version of the condensed manual that includes helpful reminders and cues
  - If new colleagues feel comfortable sharing their VIA results with trainers before onboarding, include each new colleague's signature strengths in facilitator's manual

### **Appendix F. Positive Education and Parenting**

Lea Waters, the leading researcher in positive, strength-based parenting, has led workshops for schools and parents worldwide, finding that parents often share two major points in common: a desire to help their kids thrive and a feeling of inadequacy to do so (Waters, 2017). Modern issues of concern, like screen time and cyberbullying, mixed with increasing pressure on grades, college acceptance, earning potential, and social acceptance are understandably contributing to a greater sense of unease among parents (Waters, 2017).

Waters' (2017) research suggests that the best approach to raising children is to nurture their capacity for self-development using tools from positive psychology. Specifically, it is crucial to equip children with two inner resources: (1) resilience - the ability to endure and grow from setbacks and (2) optimism - a way of thinking that drives children to create brighter futures for themselves. Evidence suggests that helping children build these assets can be rewarding and joyful for both parents and children, as it involves enhancing children's talents and positive traits, two important aspects of parenting (Waters, 2017).

*Strength-based parenting* (SBP) involves a two-step process of identifying and building on kids' strengths (Waters, 2017). It is important to note that SBP does not mean ignoring weaknesses or providing fanciful and superfluous praise, but rather is about mitigating weaknesses while providing legitimate praise based on children's actual strengths. Everyone has strengths, but it is important to help children learn how to practice and further develop their strengths for the benefit of themselves and others. SBP focuses equally on helping children leverage their strengths so that they can grow from adversity as well as on helping children use their strengths to flourish when things are going well (Waters, 2017).

While the past 50 years of parenting research indicates that positive oriented parenting styles can lead to secure attachment, enhanced brain development, life satisfaction, self-esteem, and educational and career outcomes, more recent research indicates that strength-based parenting (SBP) specifically can also act as a protective factor for kids' mental health (Devore & Ginsburg, 2005; Waters, 2017). In fact, SBP predicts life satisfaction in teens over and beyond the authoritative style of parenting (a style that balances warmth and control), which has long been shown to yield the best outcomes in kids (Waters, 2015). In one study, Waters (2015) demonstrated that 35% of life satisfaction in teens is accounted for by parenting and while authoritative parenting explains 16% of life satisfaction, SBP contributes 19% (Waters, 2015). This data suggests that SBP and authoritative parenting taken together may yield the best results in kids, but that when taken alone, SBP may be the better option. This is an especially important point to consider as research shows that there is a universal dip in life satisfaction for teenagers around the ages of 14 and 15 and that teens are at the greatest risk of developing mental illness (Waters, 2017).

Other research findings with regards to teens indicate that when they have strengths-focused parents, they report better psychological outcomes, including lower levels of daily stress and more proactive ways of coping with stress, better management of problems in friendships, higher likelihood of achieving homework deadlines, and higher amounts of positive emotions (Waters, 2017). Additional research in kids and adults associates strengths with better managed transitions in schools, higher levels of academic achievement, higher levels of physical fitness and engagement in healthy behaviors, increased self-esteem, reduced risk for depression, and a greater capacity to manage stress and hardship (Aviv & Shoshani, 2012; Waters, 2017).

In one study, parents who participated in a four-week strength-based parenting workshop experienced significantly higher levels of positive emotions when thinking about their children as well as significantly higher parental self-efficacy (Sun & Waters, 2017). Additional research shows that SBP and using strengths both independently predict subjective well-being and that growth mindset moderates the relationship between having a strength-based parent and the degree to which kids use their strengths (Waters, 2017). Based on the importance of SBP on well-being, and the quantity of time students spend at home, it is important to consider parents when devising a well-rounded positive education program.

### Appendix G: Additional Opportunity Areas

A) Develop a strategy to help teachers incorporate positive psychology into the wider school curriculum, such as math, science, and art, using implicit teaching styles; focus on strengthening teachers' ability and motivation to look for links between positive psychology and core learning objectives.

B) Develop a strategy to further embed positive psychology into the *culture* at Shipley; focus on strategies that guide the culture of Shipley to be centered more on core positive psychology principles. We came up with a few suggestions:

1. At the next training for *all* colleagues in either August or February, we recommend inviting them to be generative and allowing them to solve problems through appreciative inquiry type questions, as this will likely help them feel more engaged and motivated (M. Worline, personal communication, March 3, 2018). For instance, "What does Shipley do to build community and what could it do even better?" This could also help reaffirm to colleagues that this is indeed about their well-being and that Shipley values their input. However, follow-through on Shipley's part would then be essential in maintaining trust (Cooperrider & Godwin, 2015)
2. Provide Shipley's trained trainers with additional training by Penn trainers and look into coaching certifications or other professional development opportunities for this group (A. Adler, personal communication, March 9, 2018).
3. As leaders set the stage for what is normal and acceptable behavior in the workplace, we recommend that leaders practice being vulnerable and open so that colleagues feel safe to do the same in return (Dutton, 2003). It may be helpful to have a leader participate in new

colleague training, in which they practice being open and vulnerable in engaging with the material so that new colleagues reciprocate

4. Have trained trainers design school planners for colleagues that include mini-positive writing interventions. Writing interventions have been shown to enhance well-being, relationships, character, physical health, and to reinforce concepts (R. Rebele, personal communication, March 3, 2018). Some possible writing interventions are included here: 3 good things, best possible self, goal setting, writing about intensely positive emotional experiences, and writing 3 good things they have done for others among a number of many others.
5. Create an official program for the trained trainers. It would be beneficial to have a program in place when considering Shipley's long-term impact, as the school will likely need a system for training future trainers and ensuring that colleagues are up-to-date on the latest positive psychology research. Having a program set up would also provide ongoing opportunities for other colleagues to become more involved if they wished to and ultimately help expand the program further. A program like this, in which trained trainers could hold leadership positions and ensure that it is smoothly run, would also empower trainers even further and provide them with more agency.
6. Encourage supervisors to be more relationally attentive during day-to-day interactions with colleagues, to strength-spot when opportunities arise, and to establish rituals and routines to celebrate colleague accomplishments and milestones. Not only will this help to further embed ACR and strengths language into Shipley's culture, but this would help enhance colleague experience at work. Indeed, research indicates that 60-70% of

someone's day-to-day work experience is driven by immediate supervisor interaction (M. Worline, personal communication, March 3, 2018).

7. Utilize Shipley's technology to support webinars for trainings that are more spread out and to create promotional videos (A. Adler, personal communication, March 13, 2018).

C) Develop a plan to integrate positive psychology training for parents of Shipley school students, helping parents create a culture of well-being outside of Shipley with a focus on supporting the students' well-being; the objective would be to help the Shipley students "live" positive psychology, both at school and at home. Having teachers, colleagues, and parents collaborate and interconnect through positive education would also help transform the school culture more quickly (Dutton, 2003). See Appendix F for research on Positive Education and Parenting.

D) Develop a plan focused on the younger grades of Shipley by creating fun and enticing positive psychology material that motivates young students to embrace positive psychology at an early age and as they continue to develop through the school.

### **Appendix H: Survey results related to Meaning**

The retreat also seems to have impacted some aspects of meaning (M). Although there were no significant changes between the pre- and post- scores, the colleagues' answers to the survey question "*To what extent do you generally feel that you have a sense of direction in your work?*" increased from 7.73 to 7.94. It's possible that the retreat had a positive effect on enhancing colleagues' sense of direction at Shipley. However, another meaning related survey question, "*To what extent is your work purposeful and meaningful?*", showed a drop in scores from 8.09 to 7.89. This may be due to the relatively higher stress levels and heavier workloads in December (the end of the Semester) compared to August (the beginning of the semester); timing may also explain the slight dip in health scores. This hypothesis requires further investigation.

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