Mrs. Kowalski’s achievements are focused on encouraging good character, and kindness in particular. Her daily activities include beginning each day with a morning meeting, where students learn to greet one another and share meaningful conversations. Throughout the day they interact and play cooperatively.

Mrs. Kowalski also spreads the message of good character beyond her own classroom. She spearheaded the school’s Renaissance Character Committee, which focuses on character achievements in the entire school. One idea the committee introduced was installing “Buddy Benches” in their playground, where students can go to indicate their need for a friend. The Committee also organizes schoolwide rallies where students who model positive character traits receive the “BE EPIC” Award. Staff members who show kindness to one another are recognized as well.

In Mrs. Kowalski’s classroom bullying is rare, attendance is high, and test scores have improved. These results provide strong evidence that good character and academic success go hand in hand.