

## 2019 Application Guidelines for Schools and Districts Applying after Receiving the National Designation in 2014 or Before (Re-Applicants)

Thank you for your continued commitment to comprehensive character education and the School of Character process. As you complete this re-application process, please remember we have your past application(s) in your application folder, and seek to focus the current application on what is new, what has changed, what you have learned and how your program has grown since you were recognized as a National School of Character. This process is meant to:

- Ensure that National Schools of Character continue using the *11 Principles* as a basis for their commitment to continued improvement
- Keep schools connected to Character.org's national professional learning community focused on character education
- Encourage recognized schools to serve as role models and mentors for schools new to the Schools of Character process
- Your application will be evaluated at the state level. If you are named a State School of Character, you will be eligible to apply immediately, with the same application for the national level.
  1. Evaluators will be looking for how your feedback has been addressed
  2. Site visits will now be given to previous National Schools of Character
  3. In order to become a State School of Character, the school must exhibit implementation of at least a 3.3 by their state evaluator.
  4. **As we have been improving the recertification process over the last three years, we have realized that it requires a more intensive evaluation process. Evaluators work hard to ensure you have not only deepened your initiative since your first designation, but have also become a leader for the Schools of Character process.**

The application has five sections. Applicants will be able to navigate between sections without having to complete one part before moving to another.

### Part I

Application information and demographics

### Part II

Describe the school's character journey in 1500 characters or less.

#### Overview of school and character education journey [1500 characters max]

Use these questions to guide the narrative of this section:

- How and why did you begin your character initiative?
- What challenges have you faced as a school community?
- What is your character initiative trying to accomplish?
- How were parents, teachers, and community members brought on board?

You will also be asked to list three resources that have influenced the school’s character education journey.

### **Part III**

#### **Self-Assessment Implementation of the 11 Principles**

##### **Self-Evaluations**

*Schools may use the assessment tool to distribute the rubric for stakeholders to score the implementation of the 11 Principles. There is an opportunity for students to also be included, but this may be impossible for young elementary students so it is not required. The applicant will provide email addresses for stakeholders, and the assessment will be compiled automatically.*

##### **Outreach Initiatives**

As a School of Character, the process is to learn, grow, and then lead when a school reaches National School of Character status. A part of our character is to serve others. In this section discuss how you have been leading others since your recognition.

**Describe the outreach that your school has been involved with in order to spread the 11 Principles and Schools of Character. [2,500 characters max]**

##### **Questions to Consider**

- What are you doing now to disseminate Schools of Character practices to other schools?
- How are you helping other schools in your district to improve character education?
- Are you working with your district toward National District of Character recognition, and if so, how?
- In what ways are you reaching out to schools outside of your district to promote character education?
- Has your school been a part of reaching out to legislation to educate them on the power of character education?
- Has anyone in your school been published in works that discuss the *11 Principles* and/or Schools of Character?

##### **Implementation of the 11 Principles**

The school/district writes a description of their implementation of each Principle. For each Principle, guiding questions taken directly from the 11 Principles or the Application Guidelines are provided. Click on “Questions to Consider” to see the questions. These tips are not new. They are to be used as a final check or resource to ensure that all the key indicators are addressed. Evaluators use them when writing feedback that offers suggestions that will strengthen a program.

##### **Important Tips**

- Schools/Districts do have to attach evidence for each Principle
- The Evidence of Impact in Part IV will be evaluated along with the narrative for Principle 11
- The narrative for each Principle should address the key indicators for the Principle

**Principle 1: Core values are defined, implemented, and embedded into school culture. [2,500 characters max] (Please make sure to review the definition of core values in the 11 Principles document.)**

##### **Questions to Consider**

1.1 Stakeholders in the school community select or agree to a set of core values.

- What are your core values? (You may call these pillars, virtues, traits, expectations, or a touchstone, for example.)

- Is there a balance of moral and performance values?
- How, when, why, and by whom were these selected and adopted? If they have been in place for some time or were selected at the district level, how do you revisit and reflect upon them?

1.2 *Core values actively guide every aspect of school life.*

- Do students, staff, and parents use common language reflecting the school's core values? How is this common language taught and promoted?
- How do staff teach, model, and integrate the core values into all aspects of school life?
- How are core values embedded in school policies and procedures?
- How are core values used to guide hiring practices and the orientation of new teaching and non-teaching staff?

1.3 *Reminders and statements of core values are visible throughout the school community.*

- What is your school's mission, and how does the school mission statement align with your core values and/or character initiative?
- How are the core values made visible to your school community?
- How are what the core values "look like" and "sound like" seen in terms of observable behaviors?
- How does the school know the staff, students, and parents can identify the core values and recognize their importance as a distinctive feature of the school?
- How have the core values been modified, and how has that been communicated to the greater community?
- If core values have not been revisited, what has been done to increase your communication of core values to your community?
- Have there been any meaningful improvements of strategies, policies, or procedures to integrate the core values into school administration and school life?
- Describe any additional initiatives to communicate the core values within the school community.
- What prior *processes* have remained the same, and what *processes* have changed?

**For districts only:**

- How does the district incorporate core values in its community and public relations efforts?
- How has the district established core values as part of its vision, mission, goals, objectives, regulations, and policies, and sought to promote a community of adults and students based on a commitment to excellence and ethics?

**School or district will upload two Word or PDF documents to demonstrate the presence of this principle in your school or district. DO NOT include photographs as evidence, and limit documents to 1-3 pages.**

**Suggested types of evidence:**

- An interview form used in hiring with questions tied to core values
- Newsletters that highlight and/or reinforce core values
- Handbook examples with core values present
- Mission statement which includes core values
- Promotional materials with core values
- Agendas for staff meeting with inclusion of value work
- Student essays regarding values
- Lesson plans with time allotted for value work

**Principle 2: *The school defines "character" comprehensively to include thinking, feeling, and doing.* [2,500 characters max]**

## **Questions to Consider**

2.1 *Staff teach and provide opportunities for students to understand core values, ethical decision-making, and application to life situations.*

- How does staff help students understand the core values, and how the core values can help them make good choices?
- How do students demonstrate this understanding?
- How do students demonstrate the knowledge of the importance of core values?

2.2 *The School or District provides experiences and time for students reflect on and internalize the core values.*

- How do staff help students become committed to core values?
- What opportunities do students have to reflect on the core values through discussions of real-life problems and situations?
- How do staff meet students' needs for safety, belonging, competence, and autonomy?

2.3 *The School or District provides opportunities for students practice the core values so that they become habitual patterns of behavior.*

- How do staff encourage students to examine their own behavior in light of the core values and challenge them to make their behavior consistent with the core values?
- What practice in and feedback on academic and behavioral skills do students receive through everyday classroom operations? (classroom meetings)
- What opportunities do students have to practice the core values in the context of working with other students on class activities? (cross-age buddies, peer mentors, cooperative learning, or other collaborative strategies)
- How has your school's approach to define "character" comprehensively to include thinking, feeling, and doing evolved?
- What prior *processes* have remained the same, and what *processes* have changed?

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### **Suggested types of evidence:**

- Class meeting agendas with character components
- Cross-age buddies documentation
- Cooperative learning lesson plans
- Classroom routines and policies that help students understand and adopt core values
- Behavior expectations with definitions
- Goal setting, journaling, reflective writing

**Principle 3: *The school uses a comprehensive, intentional, and proactive approach to develop character.* [2,500 characters max]**

## **Questions to Consider**

3.1 *The school is intentional and proactive in addressing social, emotional, and character development.*

- What research-based standards, core competencies, and/or key development indicators are used to assure appropriate skills are taught to include self-control and self-regulation?
- How are the social emotional character development skills taught at all levels?

**For districts only:**

How has the district identified and adopted social, emotional, and character development skills in its instructional program or curriculum?

**3.2 Character is integrated into all aspects of teaching and learning.**

- How do teachers teach core values through their academic subjects and provide opportunities for students to discuss ethical issues?
- What examples can you give of lessons from teachers in diverse subject areas that explicitly include curricular integration of character?
- How does the school support school-wide character lessons? (advisory, classroom meetings, content area maps)
- How do teachers focus on character in the content of their curriculum?

**For districts only:**

How is character education included in academic curriculum frameworks?

**3.3 Character education is infused in all aspects of the school day including classes, procedures, meetings, and extra-curricular activities.**

- How are you embedding character into all settings of the school?
- How are using the school's values to guide TOTAL school life?
- What new initiatives document how character education is integrated into academic content, the ways teachers conduct classes and events outside of the classroom?
- Specifically, how are the school's core values used to help students reason, analyze and evaluate literature, characters in history, current events or events in the school/community?
- What prior *processes* have remained the same, and what *processes* have changed?
- Have you continued to develop a strategic plan, and if so, how has it evolved?

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***Types of Evidence***

- Agendas from character education team meetings
- Lesson plans with ethical issues or character ed components
- Strategic plan for character education
- Classroom rules or guidelines tied to core values
- Syllabus for class with character education focus
- Class meeting agendas that include character components
- Curriculum frameworks that demonstrate integration of character education
- Documents showing character ed is infused throughout campus, not only in classrooms (e.g. bus, cafeteria, sports, music...)

**Principle 4: *The school creates a caring community.* [2,500 characters max]**

**4.1 *The school makes it a high priority to foster caring attachments between students and staff.***

- Do students perceive staff as caring and report that they could go to an adult in the school with a problem? How do you know?
- Do staff attend school events?

- Does the school encourage students and teachers to meet in small group settings such as class meetings or advisor-advisee periods?
- Do staff provide extra help in academic work and counsel or mentor students when needed?
- Is discipline approached in a caring and respectful way?

4.2 *The school makes it a high priority to help students form caring attachments to each other.*

- Do students perceive their peers as friendly and inclusive? How do you know?
- What educational strategies does the school use to encourage mutual respect among students?
- How is “inclusion for all” made a focus?

4.3 *The school makes it a high priority to foster caring attachments among adults within the school community.*

- How are parents, community members, and guests made to feel welcome in the school? How do you know?
- What efforts do staff make to form positive relationships with students’ families?
- How do staff perceive the work environment?
- How are relationships nurtured among staff?
- How does the administration foster a collegial atmosphere?
- How has the character development plan impacted staff morale and teacher turnover?

4.4 *The school takes steps to prevent peer cruelty and violence and deals with it effectively when it occurs.*

- What do students report regarding the frequency of bullying and intolerance, and how bullying is addressed by the staff?
- What anti-bullying strategies and/or programs do you use?
- What impact have they had?
- What activities, programs, and processes that promote tolerance, understanding, respect, and peace among students do you have?
- How do staff deal with and discourage peer mistreatment and encourage respect among students?
- Since your last National School of Character application, what new initiatives document programs or strategies that help strengthen and build caring relationships between students, students and staff, among staff, as well as with parents and the school?
- What prior *processes* have remained the same, and what *processes* have changed?
- What measures do you use to analyze the culture?
- How has the perception of your school’s climate evolved?

**For districts only:**

How does the staff at the district level make efforts to develop caring and respectful relationships among themselves, with staff at the school level, and in the broader community?

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***Types of Evidence***

- Surveys to speak to relationships
- Evidence of events outside of the classroom where students and staff attend
- Documents from programs or strategies being used to build positive relationships (e.g. school/community events, mentoring/tutoring, tolerance programs, anti-bullying strategies, class meetings, advisories, conflict resolution strategies, staff gatherings and celebrations, school events, and home visits)
- Data that demonstrates strength in relationships

**Principle 5: *The school provides students with opportunities for moral action.* [2,500 characters max]**

**Questions to Consider**

5.1 *The school expects students to engage in service, both community service and service learning, and prepares them to be competent to do so. \*Please review the overview in the 11 Principles document for an explanation of service learning.*

- What are the school's expectations regarding service learning?
- How does the school balance community service and service learning?
- How are your expectations for peaceful conflict resolution, academic integrity, good sportsmanship, and service to others taught? How can you be sure students know these expectations and that students and staff take responsibility for these expectations?
- How many students participated in service-learning activities during the most recent school year?

**For districts only:**

- How does the district encourage and set clear guidelines and expectations for service to others, academic integrity, and good sportsmanship ?
- Where does the district explicitly state that service learning includes student voice and choice, integration into the curriculum, and a reflection component?

5.2 *The school provides all students with opportunities for service and service learning within the school and time to reflect on them.*

- How does your school or district provide opportunities for students to engage in service within the school?
- How are teachers providing instruction where students can practice and or advance conflict resolution, ethical decision-making, and academic integrity?
- How many students typically are involved in service projects? How does your school engage all students in these service opportunities?
- How do teachers connect service to the curriculum and core values? How do they engage students in reflection about these service opportunities?

5.3 *The school provides all students with repeated opportunities for service and service learning outside the school and time to reflect about them.*

- What opportunities do students have to participate in service-learning projects that contribute to the larger community?
- How many students are involved in service projects, and how many benefit from these opportunities?
- How do teachers connect community service to the curriculum and core values (service learning)?
- How many students participated in service learning activities during the last school year?
- Are you using service learning as a teaching strategy with the components of research and investigation, a meaningful, purposeful project with curriculum integration into classes, student reflection and sharing or demonstrating knowledge gained as you further embed the teaching of character into your school culture?
- In what new ways have students been given the opportunity to demonstrate moral action? Specifically, are there new initiatives for student leadership of conflict resolution, academic integrity and service learning (in or out of school)?
- If service learning is cited (as opposed to community service), make sure to demonstrate how the service projects are: (1) tied to curriculum goals, (2) provide meaningful opportunities for student leadership and problem solving and (3) include reflection and project evaluation.
- What prior *processes* have remained the same, and what *processes* have changed?

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### ***Types of Evidence***

- Service learning calendar of events/opportunities
- Conflict resolution/peer mediation strategies, trainings
- Sportsmanship policies
- Academic integrity policies/expectations
- Examples of students serving the school (e.g., buddies, school beautification, leadership groups, peer mediators)
- Examples of students serving the wider community (e.g., elderly, under-resourced, veterans, animals, environment)
- Examples that demonstrate how service projects allow students to identify community needs, plan/organize projects, and reflect on outcomes
- Examples that demonstrate that service projects are tied to content/curriculum

**Principle 6: *The school offers a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character, and helps them succeed.* [2,500 characters max]**

### **Questions to Consider**

6.1 *The academic curriculum provides meaningful and appropriate challenges to all students.*

- How do teachers provide all students with opportunities to interact with academic content in engaging, hands-on, appropriate ways?
- How does the school community seek mastery of content and skills?
- How do you know students are excited about learning and feel challenged?
- How does instruction increase students' sense of competence and emphasize student autonomy?

6.2 *The school staff understands and accommodates the diverse interests, cultures, and learning needs of all students.*

- How does staff engage in ongoing identification of students' learning needs and cultural differences?
- What efforts are made to differentiate instruction?
- How do staff challenge and help all students do high-quality work and strive for continuous improvement?
- What achievement gaps between diverse student subgroups exist? What active steps are you taking to eliminate such gaps?
- What evidence points to parents and students reporting that teachers know their students well or that they understand and respond to their learning needs and cultural differences?

6.3 *Teachers promote the development of performance character traits that support students' intellectual growth, academic performance, and capacity for both self-direction and teamwork.*

- How do teachers promote thinking habits that lead to intellectual growth in students?
- How do students set goals and how are they aware of their growth as learners?
- How do teachers promote work-related habits that help students do their best work?
- How do teachers promote social habits that help students work together harmoniously?
- How do teachers promote the importance of academic integrity in all classes?
- What new work has been done to provide a meaningful challenge to all students while accommodating diverse cultures and learning needs to support student's intellectual growth, academic performance, and capacity for teamwork?
- How do students reflect on their capacity to set and meet performance character goals?
- What prior *processes* have remained the same, and what *processes* have changed?

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### **Types of Evidence**

- Examples of challenging, hands-on lessons and projects
- Examples of differentiated instruction
- Examples of sensitivity to cultural differences
- Examples of programs and strategies being used to address achievement gap issues
- Examples of strategies being used to help students set and reach goals
- Examples of students having “voice and choice” in the classroom
- Examples of academic integrity being taught

**Principle 7: *The school fosters students’ self-motivation.* [2,500 characters max]**

### **Questions to Consider**

*7.1 Staff and students recognize and celebrate the positive, natural consequences of acts of character rather than rewarding students with recognition or material rewards.*

- How are students helped to understand on a personal level what it means to be self-motivated, and why it is important?
- How have staff addressed the question of intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation?
- Have staff reflected on whether their practices develop self-motivation?
- Have the staff sought agreement on a shared philosophy regarding praise, rewards, and punishment?
- Are students recognized for good behavior or displaying core values? If so, how?
- Does recognition include a large portion of the school community?
- How do classroom management strategies promote doing the right thing because it’s the right thing to do?
- What methods of academic instruction enable students to produce work of which they should be proud?
- Does your school integrate PBIS (Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support) with character education? If so, how does this work in your school setting?
- Do staff and students recognize and express positive comments to each other as part of the everyday life of the school?
- How does your school celebrate the uniqueness of each student?
- In what ways since your last application has your school worked to accomplish staff agreement to remove the use of token incentives and promote student internalization of core values?
- What prior *processes* around discipline have remained the same, and what *processes* have changed?

#### **For districts only:**

- How does your district use its public relations programs to focus attention on outstanding acts of good character?

*7.2 Student behaviors and mistakes are used as opportunities to teach and reinforce character development.*

- What is your school’s/district’s approach to behavior management and discipline?
- How are staff trained in developmentally appropriate forms of classroom management?
- How does the discipline code use explanation, discussion, and natural and logical consequences in ways that help students learn from their mistakes and move forward?
- What role do students have in classroom management and school governance?
- How do you tie your discipline code to your core values?

### 7.3 *Character education is evident in how teachers organize their classes.*

- How are students involved in creating routines and procedures that address belonging, autonomy, and competence?
- What classroom routines demonstrate respect for students and engage them in ways to develop core values?
- What policies and procedures support academic integrity, establishing clear guidelines around owning work and acceptable levels of collaboration?

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#### ***Types of Evidence***

- Behavior management/positive discipline strategies and policies
- Opportunities for students to reflect on their choices in light of core values (e.g. Think Sheets)
- Examples of staff development/training/discussions on topics such as behavior/classroom management and motivation
- Examples of students modeling good character without the presence of extrinsic rewards

**Principle 8: *All staff share the responsibility for developing, implementing, and modeling ethical character.* [2,500 characters max]**

#### ***Questions to Consider***

##### ***8.1 All staff commit to hold each other accountable for modeling ethical character.***

- How do staff model core values in their interactions with students?
- How has staff created behavioral norms so that they feel comfortable approaching peers to discuss their actions and/or challenging situations?
- How do they demonstrate respectful and supportive behavior?
- Do they see themselves as models for students?
- Do students and their parents view staff as models?

##### ***8.2 All staff members are involved in planning, designing, and implementing the schoolwide character initiative.***

- Do all professional and support staff receive training and information on their role in the character education initiative?
- Do administrators, teachers, and counselors receive ongoing staff development?
- What recent professional development activities related to character development and opportunities for sharing have staff had?
- Do all staff have opportunities to be involved in character education planning and implementation?
- Are teachers, administrators, and counselors substantially involved?

##### ***8.3 Time is given to staff to learn about, plan, and reflect on the teaching of character in their roles.***

- Do aspects of the character education initiative regularly appear on the agenda for faculty meetings and in-service days?
- Does the administration provide staff release time for developing promising ideas, planning events, and reflection?  
Do teachers use core values to reflect on their own behaviors and procedures?
- What new processes increase staff's ability to model the core values in their interactions with students, staff, and parents?

- How has the school continued to include all staff in planning and receiving character education professional development and reflection?
- Since your last application, how have you educated and oriented new members of the school community, especially faculty and staff, about your character education initiative?
- How has your school helped each educator grow in each of the *11 Principles*?
- What prior *processes* have remained the same, and what *processes* have changed?

**For districts only:**

- How does your district encourage sharing information by providing venues for collaboration among schools; establishing a centralized source of materials, curricula, and other tools; and sponsoring regular conferences or meetings on character education?

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***Types of Evidence***

- Evidence of staff modeling of core values
- Examples of/agendas from staff development/training
- Faculty meeting agendas that show commitment to character education
- Examples of resources provided to staff/faculty

**Principle 9: *The school's character initiative has shared leadership and long-range support for continuous improvement.* [2,500 characters max]**

***Questions to Consider***

**9.1 *The school principal and other leaders champion the character initiative.***

- What role does the school principal play in championing the character effort?
- What would happen if the principal left?
- How do school leaders show their support for the long-range survival and growth of the character initiative?
- How does your school or district act as a leader in helping others schools with their character education efforts?
- What leadership positions in your school have changed since your last recognition?
- For those that have changed, what effect has your change in leadership had on your character education program overall?
- Has the size or membership of the character education team changed?
- How often does your team meet, and is there a strategic plan?
- What kind of character education professional development has been provided for any new school leadership?
- What prior *processes* have remained the same, and what *processes* have changed?

**For districts only:**

- Is character education a shared priority with your district board and district superintendent?
- Does the district hire school principals and central office personnel committed to character education and encourage them to incorporate character education into their work and evaluation of staff?
- Does the district require central office personnel (e.g., superintendents, athletic directors, directors of guidance and other student and administrative services) to incorporate character education into their work?

**9.2 *There is a leadership team dedicated to the character initiative that includes staff, students, and parents.***

- What group or structure guides character education strategic planning and implementation? Who is a part of this group? How often does this group meet? How do they plan? How do they get input from stakeholders?
- How do the school's regular governing mechanisms assume responsibility for management of character-related policies and plans?
- How does the leadership team engage the entire school community in taking ownership for the character initiative?

**For districts only:**

- Does an ongoing district-community character education committee guide the planning and implementation of district-wide character education efforts?
- Does the committee include representatives of local government agencies, business partners, religious organizations, youth organizations, parents, students, and staff representatives from the school?

**9.3 Students are explicitly involved in leadership roles that contribute to the character initiative.**

- What role do students have in creating and maintaining standards of behavior?
- What leadership roles and responsibilities do they have within the classroom and school community?
- Do they value the leadership roles available to them and see themselves as contributing members of the wider community? How do you know?
- What recruitment, training, and activities involved in student-led projects are connected to the character initiative?
- How are students taught leadership skills?

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***Types of Evidence***

- Character education committee (or other committee or structure) plans, goals, meeting minutes, membership – including the diversity of the committee (e.g. staff, parents, community members, and students where age appropriate)
- Examples of staff and student leadership
- Outreach efforts and plans, evidence of leadership in the field of character education (e.g., in-services, workshops, visits hosted)
- Evidence of principal/administration championing the character education initiative

**Principle 10: *The school engages families and community as partners in the character initiative.* [2,500 characters max]**

***Questions to Consider***

**10.1 Families are involved in the character initiative.**

- Do parents serve in character education leadership roles?
- Are they actively involved in carrying the character initiative to the parent-teacher organization and parent community?
- Are families aware of and supportive of the initiative? How do you know?
- How do parents contribute to school and classroom activities beyond fundraising?
- How does the school reach out to and welcome all parents?
- How does the school welcome parents and prioritize inclusive?

10.2 *The school communicates often with parents and guardians about the character initiative and seeks families' input and engagement.*

- How do you communicate with families about your character education efforts?
- What workshops are offered for parents and families around integrating character and parenting strategies?
- How do you solicit input from families?
- How do you welcome new families to the school and orient them to the school's character education mission?
- How have you increased your ability to engage families and the community in the character education initiative?
- What prior *processes* have remained the same, and what *processes* have changed?

10.3 *The school seeks help and involvement from the wider community.*

- Do community members serve in character education leadership roles?
- Are they actively involved in carrying the character initiative to the larger community?
- Are community members aware of and supportive of the initiative? How do you know?
- Do community members volunteer in the school and participate in school and classroom events?

**For districts only:**

- How does the district engage a broad spectrum of the community in its character education initiative?
- How does it involve appropriate local government agencies, youth-serving organizations, and the business community?

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***Types of Evidence***

- Examples of communicating with parents (e.g. newsletters, phone, email, website)
- Examples of receiving communication from parents (e.g. surveys, meetings, informal chats)
- Parent workshops and resources offered to families
- Efforts/activities to welcome new families
- Examples of parent and community member leadership and involvement
- Volunteer opportunities for parents and community members
- Evidence of partnerships with local community organizations and businesses

***Principle 11: The school assesses its implementation of character education, its culture and climate, and the character growth of students on a regular basis.***

Be sure in your narrative response and attached evidence for this Principle that you clearly demonstrate the impact of character education on student academic achievement, student behavior, and school culture/climate. Be sure to provide specific quantitative and qualitative evidence. Use numbers rather than percentages when reporting changes in student behavior. The narrative and supporting evidence combined should demonstrate that your community has gathered data, reflected on it, and then acted as needed. **[2,500 characters max]**

***Questions to Consider***

11.1 *Core values are reviewed and discussed annually so that they can be reaffirmed, updated, or revised as needed.*

- What surveys have been given around the effectiveness of the core values?
- How are the core values aligned with daily activities, discipline, or code of conduct interactions?
- How are core values communicated with everyone?
- Have you created a touchstone, mantra, creed, or other ways to embed the core values?

11.2 *The school sets goals and measures (both quantitatively and qualitatively) its culture, climate, and character initiative.*

- Do you have a written, annual character education plan, and how do you use data to inform that plan?
- What opportunities has the school provided to assess character education or share the results with conclusions?
- How does the school use data in an ongoing manner to make changes and improvements to the character education initiative?
- How has your school continued to use data to set goals, reflect, and report on the impact of the character education initiative?
- How have you continued to strengthen the assessment of student progress in understanding and demonstrating positive character?
- How often do you survey students, staff, parents and/or community members to help assess your school's growth & development?

**For districts only:**

- How does your district arrange for and finance assessment of the district's character education initiative?

11.3 *All staff members are given time to reflect upon and discuss character implementation and individual growth.*

- What approaches do you use to assess student progress in the area of character development?
- How do teachers gather feedback from their students on their perceptions of character?
- How do staff report their efforts to meet character education goals?
- How do staff examine and reflect on data through structured or informal opportunities?
- How does the leadership team report to stakeholders on efforts to implement character education?
- Describe staff turnover during the last five years.
- Please provide data demonstrating stability or growth in key character outcomes since your last application.
- How have you addressed the feedback that you received from your previous application?
- Describe data trends and/or accomplishments over the last five years.
- What prior *processes* have remained the same, and what *processes* have changed?

**For districts only:**

- How does your district build implementation of character education into the assessment of school principals and, in turn, ask principals to evaluate integration of character education into their assessment of school staff?

11.4 *The school assesses how the character education initiative impacts students.*

- What approaches does the school use to assess student progress in the area of character development?
- In questionnaires and reflections on character-related behaviors and core values, do students rate the importance of core values in their lives as high?
- What data has been collected on student behavior?
- What program development and modifications can be attributed to evaluation of the character initiative?

**School or district will upload FOUR Word or PDF documents to demonstrate the presence of this principle in your school or district. DO NOT include photographs as evidence, and limit documents to 1-3 pages.**

***Types of Evidence***

- Surveys
- Individual goal setting
- Agendas of meetings to report and plan to address data
- Charts and graphs to illustrate data on academic, behavior, and climate data

- Referral rates
- Documentation of plans to impact data
- Documentation of communicating data

Schools will also be able to upload another artifact of their choosing. Evidence provided should be in PDF or Word document format, but in this section, applicants may choose to upload a video link that helps to describe their program.

## Part IV

### Evidence of Impact

*The school will provide academic, behavior, and climate data for the past five years.*

#### Academic data

Grade reading test given	Number of students who passed 2017	Number of students who passed 2016	Number of students who passed 2015	Number of students who passed 2014	Number of students who passed 2013

Grade math test given	Number of students who passed 2017	Number of students who passed 2016	Number of students who passed 2015	Number of students who passed 2014	Number of students who passed 2013

#### Behavior data

##### Attendance Rate

2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014

##### Number of In School Suspensions (No Percentages)

2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014

##### Number of Out of School Suspensions (No Percentages)

2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014

##### Number of Discipline Referrals (No Percentages)

2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014

#### Culture and data

Survey data that demonstrates:

- Bullying is infrequent and students feel safe

- It will ask how many participants completed the survey.
- What question was asked to illustrate that bullying is infrequent and students feel safe?
- Percentage of students with a positive response.
  
- Students respect one another
  - It will ask how many participants completed the survey.
  - What question was asked to illustrate that students respect one another.
  - Percentage of students with a positive response.
  
- Staff respect one another
  - It will ask how many participants completed the survey.
  - What question was asked to illustrate that staff respect one another.
  - Percentage of staff with a positive response.
  
- Teachers and parents respect one another
  - It will ask how many participants completed the survey.
  - What question was asked to illustrate that teacher and parents respect one another.
  - Percentage of stakeholders with a positive response.

## Part V

### Additional Materials

- Photos (Upload five photographs of **character education in action** for promotional purposes. Please **do not** include a photo of the building, posters, collages or objects.) These photos will be used for webpages, magazine, and other promotional opportunities.
- Testimonials (Supply a short quote from a teacher, a member of the staff, a student, a parent, and a community member about the character education initiative)
- Lesson plan
- Promising Practices (List any Promising Practices the school received. Please include the award year.)