

2017 Application Guidelines for Schools and Districts Applying after Receiving the National Designation in 2012 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
 1. Your application will be solely evaluated at the National level
 2. The evaluators will be your previous evaluators or evaluators whose area of expertise is re-applications
 3. Evaluators will be looking for how your feedback has been addressed
 4. Site visits will not be given to previous National Schools of Character

The application has five parts. Applicants will be able to navigate from part to part 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 not** 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: The school community promotes core ethical and performance values as the foundation of good character. [2,500 characters max]

Questions to Consider

- Have your school’s core values been re-visited? If so, by whom?
- How have the core values been modified and how has that been communicated to the greater community?
- If there has been no re-visitation of core values, 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?

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

Questions to Consider

- 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?

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

Questions to Consider

- 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?

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

Questions to Consider

- 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?

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

Questions to Consider

- 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?

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

Questions to Consider

- 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?

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

Questions to Consider

- How has your school increased the focus on intrinsic motivation rather than extrinsic motivation?
- How has your school connected behavior management to core values?
- Describe any new processes your school encourages and teachers practice to develop student intrinsic motivation.
- 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?

Principle 8: *The school staff is an ethical learning community that shares responsibility for character education and adheres to the same core values that guide the students.* [2,500 characters max]

Questions to Consider

- 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?
- What prior *processes* have remained the same, and what *processes* have changed?
- How has your school helped each educator grow in each of the *11 Principles*?

Principle 9: *The school fosters shared leadership and long-range support of the character education initiative.* [2,500 characters max]

Questions to Consider

- What leadership positions in your school have changed since your last recognition?
- For those that have changed, please explain in what ways?
- 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?

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

Questions to Consider

- 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?

Principle 11: *The school regularly assesses its culture and climate, the functioning of its staff as character educators, and the extent to which its students manifest good character.*

Be sure your narrative response for this Principle along with the Evidence of Impact in Part IV 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 of Impact combined should demonstrate that your community has gathered data, reflected on it, and then acted as needed. **[2,500 characters max]**

Questions to Consider

- 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?
- During the last five years, describe staff turnover.
- 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?
- What have been your data trends and accomplishments?
- What prior *processes* have remained the same, and what *processes* have changed?

**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 2015	Number of students who passed 2014	Number of students who passed 2013	Number of students who passed 2012	Number of students who passed 2011

Grade math test given	Number of students who passed 2015	Number of students who passed 2014	Number of students who passed 2013	Number of students who passed 2012	Number of students who passed 2011

Behavior data

Attendance Rate

2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011

Number of In School Suspensions (NO Percentages)

2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011

Number of Out of School Suspensions (No Percentages)

2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011

Number of Discipline Referrals (No Percentages)

2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011

Culture and data

Survey data that tells:

- Bullying is infrequent and students feel safe
 - 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
 - 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
 - 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
 - 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.)