



For Immediate Release
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Character.org Announces 2026 State and National Schools of Character

(April 14th, 2026) WASHINGTON, D.C. — Character.org is proud to recognize 103 schools and districts from around the world as 2026 State and National Schools of Character. This year’s honorees represent 94 schools across the United States and a record-breaking nine international schools that have demonstrated a deep commitment to developing strong culture, ethical leadership, and character growth in students.

Both designations recognize schools that exemplify the values and practices outlined in Character.org’s *11 Principles Framework for Schools*, a research-based approach that helps educators intentionally cultivate environments where students grow academically while also developing important character strengths.

“Schools of Character show us what is possible when a school community commits to intentionally building a culture where students learn not only academic skills, but also empathy, curiosity, civic responsibility, and perseverance,” said Nicole Diehl, Executive Director of Schools of Character. “The schools recognized this year represent diverse communities, grade levels, and educational approaches. Recognition as a State or National School of Character reflects years of thoughtful work by educators, students, and families to ensure that character is lived and practiced every day.”

This year also introduced an updated review process designed to ensure consistent and high-quality feedback for every school that applies. Each application first underwent an initial review by an Expert Reader, who is a highly experienced educator and evaluator trained in the Schools of Character process. Expert Readers carefully reviewed each submission to determine whether the application demonstrated sufficient evidence of implementation to advance to the full Schools of Character evaluation process. When a school’s program was still developing and not yet ready to advance, the Expert Reader completed a detailed review and provided comprehensive feedback to help guide the school’s continued growth.

In addition to the schools advancing to State or National recognition, 73 schools received Emerging or Honorable Mention designations this year. These schools demonstrated meaningful progress in building a culture of character and received comprehensive feedback to help inform their next steps in strengthening their initiatives.

Despite the many challenges schools continue to face, participation in the Schools of Character process remains strong. The number of schools applying for recognition and the quality of their submissions demonstrate educators’ ongoing commitment to nurturing both academic growth and character development.



The State School of Character designation recognizes schools that are demonstrating strong implementation of the *11 Principles* and building a culture where students learn to lead with integrity, responsibility, and respect. For many schools, this recognition reflects years of intentional effort to align practices, relationships, and learning experiences with shared core values, and it often marks an important milestone on the journey toward national recognition as schools continue to deepen and expand their work. This year, 27 schools and three districts have been recognized as State Schools and Districts of Character.

Schools recognized as National Schools of Character have demonstrated a deep and sustained commitment to the *11 Principles* and serve as models of excellence for schools across the country and around the world. These schools illustrate how character development can be fully integrated into academics, relationships, leadership, and community engagement, and they often mentor other schools seeking to strengthen their own character initiatives. This year, 72 schools and one district, including nine international schools, have been recognized as National Schools and Districts of Character. The nine international schools represent Australia, Brazil, Canada, Romania, and the Philippines.

Criteria for selection are based on Character.org's *11 Principles Framework for Schools: A Guide to Cultivating a Culture of Character*. The framework outlines key practices for creating school communities where students and adults share core values, relationships are centered on respect and belonging, and students are given meaningful opportunities to practice and reflect on their character strengths.

Here is the full list of 2026 State and National Schools and Districts of Character:

UNITED STATES

Alabama

Central High School, Phenix City

State and National School of Character

Cherokee Bend Elementary School, Mountain Brook

State and National School of Character

Hall-Kent Elementary School, Homewood

State and National School of Character

Homewood Middle School, Homewood

State and National School of Character

Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary, Tuscaloosa

State School of Character

Meadowlane Elementary School, Phenix City

National School of Character

Shades Cahaba Elementary, Homewood

State and National School of Character

Sherwood Elementary School, Phenix City

State and National School of Character

Vestavia Hills Elementary West, Vestavia Hills

State and National School of Character

Westview Elementary School, Phenix City

State and National School of Character



Arkansas

Cross County Elementary School, Cherry Valley
State School of Character

Arizona

Imagine Camelback, Phoenix
State and National School of Character
Imagine Coolidge Elementary School, Coolidge
State School of Character

California

Brentwood School (Lower School), Los Angeles
State and National School of Character

Florida

River City Science Academy District, Jacksonville
State District of Character
River City Science Academy Innovation, Jacksonville
State School of Character

Michigan

Bingham Farms Elementary, Bingham Farms
State School of Character
Boulan Park Middle School, Troy
State School of Character
Hamilton Elementary School, Troy
National School of Character
Schroeder Elementary School, Troy
State School of Character
Troy Union Elementary, Troy
State and National School of Character

Missouri

Bayless Elementary School, St. Louis
State and National School of Character
Bayless High School, St. Louis
State and National School of Character
Campbellton Elementary, New Haven
State and National School of Character
Clearview Elementary, Union
State School of Character
Coleman Elementary, Villa Ridge
State School of Character
Crestview Middle School, Ballwin
National School of Character



Don Earl Early Childhood, Arnold

State and National School of Character

EPIC Elementary, Liberty

National School of Character

Eureka High School, Eureka

State and National School of Character

Gladden Elementary School, Belton

State and National School of Character

Hanna Woods Elementary School, Manchester

National School of Character

Lafayette High School, Wildwood

National School of Character

North Kirkwood Middle School, Kirkwood

State and National School of Character

Old Bonhomme Elementary, St. Louis

State and National School of Character

Ridge Meadows Elementary, Ellisville

National School of Character

River Bend Elementary, Chesterfield

State and National School of Character

Robertsville Elementary, Robertsville

National School of Character

Washington Early Learning Center, Washington

State School of Character

North Carolina

Union Academy Charter School, Monroe

State and National School of Character

New Jersey

Alan B. Shepard Jr. Elementary School, Old Bridge

State and National School of Character

Burlington County Institute of Technology - Westampton Campus, Westampton

State and National School of Character

Camden County Technical Schools-Gloucester Campus, Sicklerville

National School of Character

Carl Sandburg Middle School, Old Bridge

State and National School of Character

Caroline L. Reutter School, Franklinville

State School of Character

Central Elementary School, East Hanover

National School of Character

Donald Stewart Center for Early Childhood Education School #51, Elizabeth

State and National School of Character



General Charles G. Harker School, Woolwich Township

State School of Character

Glassboro High School, Glassboro

State School of Character

Helen A. Fort Middle School, Pemberton

National School of Character

Hillside Elementary School, Livingston

State and National School of Character

Joyce Kilmer Elementary, Cherry Hill

State School of Character

Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan, Mary Jackson STEM Academy #92, Elizabeth

State and National School of Character

Kindergarten Success Academy, Roselle

State and National School of Character

Leroy Gordon Cooper Elementary School, Keyport

State and National School of Character

Pioneer Academy, Wayne

State School of Character

PS 20-Dr. Maya Angelou Elementary School, Jersey City

State School of Character

Raymond E. Voorhees Elementary School, Old Bridge

State School of Character

Virgil I. Grissom Elementary School, Old Bridge

State and National School of Character

Woodmont Elementary School, Pine Brook

State and National School of Character

Woodrow Wilson Middle School, Edison

State School of Character

New York

Charles E. Schwarting Elementary School, Massapequa

State and National School of Character

Drexel Ave. School, Westbury

State School of Character

Pelham Middle School, Pelham

State and National School of Character

Oklahoma

Dove Schools District, Warr Acres

National District of Character

Pennsylvania

Ad Prima Charter School, Philadelphia

State and National School of Character



Tennessee

Memphis School of Excellence Winchester, Memphis

State and National School of Character

Texas

Harmony Public Schools West Texas District, El Paso

State District of Character

Harmony School of Discovery-Houston, Houston

State and National School of Character

Harmony School Of Excellence-Katy Middle/High, Katy

State and National School of Character

Harmony School of Excellence-Sugar Land Middle School, Sugar Land

State and National School of Character

Harmony School of Innovation-Carrollton, Carrollton

National School of Character

Harmony School of Innovation-Euless, Euless

State and National School of Character

Harmony School of Innovation-Fort Worth, Fort Worth

State and National School of Character

Harmony School of Innovation-Houston, Houston

National School of Character

Harmony School of Innovation-San Antonio, San Antonio

State and National School of Character

Harmony School of Innovation-Waco, Beverly Hills

National School of Character

Harmony School of Science-Austin, Austin

National School of Character

Harmony Science Academy-Brownsville, Brownsville

State School of Character

Harmony Science Academy-Cedar Park, Austin

State School of Character

Harmony Science Academy-Cypress, Cypress

State School of Character

Harmony Science Academy-Dallas Elementary, Dallas

National School of Character

Harmony Science Academy-Katy Middle 4-7, Katy

State School of Character

Harmony Science Academy-Laredo, Laredo

State School of Character

Harmony Science Academy-Pflugerville, Pflugerville

State and National School of Character

Harmony Science Academy-San Antonio, San Antonio

State School of Character

Harmony Science Academy-Sugar Land, Sugar Land

State and National School of Character



Horizon Leadership Academy, Houston

National School of Character

School of Science and Technology District, San Antonio

State District of Character

School of Science and Technology-Schertz, Schertz

State School of Character

Tomball Memorial High School, Tomball

State and National School of Character

Wisconsin

Eastbrook Academy, Milwaukee

State and National School of Character

Rocky Branch Elementary, River Falls

State School of Character

Westside Elementary School, River Falls

State and National School of Character

INTERNATIONAL

Australia

Ivanhoe Grammar School, Ivanhoe

Australia (National) School of Character

Brazil

CEL Intercultural School, Rio de Janeiro

Rio de Janeiro and Brazil (State and National) School of Character

Canada

Nile Academy, North York, Ontario

North York and Canada (State and National) School of Character

Philippines

Southville International School and Colleges, Las Piñas City

Las Piñas City and Philippines (State and National) School of Character

Stonyhurst Southville International School - Batangas, Batangas City

Batangas City and Philippines (State and National) School of Character

Stonyhurst Southville International School - Malarayat Campus, Lipa City

Lipa City and Philippines (State and National) School of Character

Romania

Liceul Internațional de Informatică „Spectrum” Cluj-Napoca, Cluj-Napoca

Cluj-Napoca and Romania (State and National) School of Character

Liceul Teoretic Internațional de Informatică București, Bucharest

Bucharest and Romania (State and National) School of Character

Școala Gimnazială Spectrum Constanța, Constanta

Constanta and Romania (State and National) School of Character



ABOUT CHARACTER.ORG

Character.org is a worldwide network of educators, researchers, and civic leaders that empowers people of all ages to practice and model the character strengths and core values that shape the hearts, minds, and choices of every person. Founded in 1993 and formerly known as the Character Education Partnership, Character.org is widely known for its 11 Principles Framework for Schools: A Guide to Cultivating a Culture of Character. The organization's vision is to be the global leader and voice for developing character in families, schools, and organizations.

For more information, visit [Character.org](https://www.character.org), subscribe to our free weekly newsletter, and follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn.