

Character Education Quality Standards outlines key components of effective character education and allows schools and districts to assess their efforts in relation to these criteria. This instrument provides a means for reflecting on current practices, identifying short and long-term objectives, and developing or improving a strategic plan.

Character Education Quality Standards

**A SELF-ASSESSMENT
TOOL FOR SCHOOLS
AND DISTRICTS**



OUR MISSION: Character Education Partnership is dedicated to developing young people of good character who become responsible and caring citizens.

ABOUT THE QUALITY STANDARDS

Character Education Quality Standards outlines key components of effective character education and allows schools and districts to evaluate their efforts in relation to these criteria. This instrument provides a means for educators, administrators, and community members to reflect on current practices, identify short- and long-term objectives, and develop or improve a strategic plan. *Character Education Quality Standards* is based on CEP's *Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education*[™] and the *Eleven Principles Survey* by Tom Lickona and Matthew Davidson. Originally, the Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character (CAEC) at Boston University and the 1999 National Schools of Character (NSOC) blue-ribbon panel collaborated on the design to assess applicants for CEP's NSOC awards. The *Quality Standards* continue to be used for that purpose. CEP revised the document in 2003 and again in 2006, with Kathy Beland writing the latest revision after coordinating feedback from the NSOC blue-ribbon panel, the NSOC site visitor team, and other experts in character education.

ABOUT THE CHARACTER EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

The Character Education Partnership (CEP), founded in 1993, is the national advocate and leader for quality character education initiatives and advancement of effective programs in K-12 schools. CEP, a non-profit, nonpartisan, and nonsectarian organization, supports the belief that the ethical, social, and emotional development of young people is as important as their academic achievement.

CEP's flagship program, the National Schools of Character awards program, recognizes 10 schools and districts annually that exemplify excellence in character education. CEP showcases these exemplars in its annual publication and through national and local media. Winners conduct outreach activities including holding a district or regional workshop and mentoring another school or district. The rigorous criteria for the National Schools of Character program—the *Character Education Quality Standards*—form a benchmark for excellence that demonstrates character education's impact on school reform.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Character Education Partnership would like to thank the John Templeton Foundation and the UAW-GM Center for Human Resources for making the National Schools of Character awards program possible. CEP gratefully acknowledges the UAW-GM Center for Human Resources for its generous support in printing the *Quality Standards*.

For more information about CEP and the National Schools of Character program, visit the CEP website at www.character.org/nsoc (where you can download this document) or contact CEP at (800) 988-8081.

CHARACTER EDUCATION

QUALITY STANDARDS

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

This assessment instrument is most effective if two or more people participate in the scoring. Often, character education committees work together to score their school or district. Committees can collaborate to create one group score, or committee members can independently score the school or district and then compare responses.

Each of the *Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education*TM has been delineated in three to four “scoring items”: **Under each scoring item is a bulleted list of “exemplary practices” meant to serve as guidelines or examples of effective implementation, rather than as a required or exhaustive list of all possible effective practices.**

The evaluation steps are as follows:

1. Identify evaluators from the school community or outside sources. It is important that the evaluators’ opinions are as objective and nonbiased as possible.
2. After carefully reviewing each of the scoring items in relation to the school’s/district’s character education practices, score each item on the following scale:

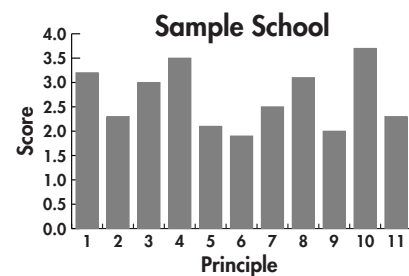
0	Not evident or visible; poor
1	Some implementation
2	Good implementation
3	Very good implementation
4	Exemplary implementation

NOTE: Do not be reluctant to give low scores. If a scoring item is not evident or has a low implementation level, it is important to represent it as such by scoring it as a “0” or “1.” If low scores are not used where appropriate, the final score will be inflated and will not accurately reflect a program’s strengths and weaknesses.

3. Scores should not be based on a simple count of how many of the “exemplary practices” listed under the item are in place. **The quality, frequency, and intensity of the practice are more important than the quantity of practices.**
4. Avoid assigning fractional scores for individual scoring items (e.g., scores for each scoring item should be 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4, not 1.5, 2.5, etc.).
5. Each principle should receive an “*average score*.” The average score is calculated by adding all of the scoring items under each principle and then dividing that number by the number of scoring items in that particular principle. For example, Principle 1, “Effective character education promotes core ethical values as the basis of good character,” has three scoring

items (1.1, 1.2, and 1.3). The score for each item should be added together and then divided by three. The average score for each principle need not be a whole number.

6. The total average score for a school or district is the sum of the average score for each principle divided by 11. (Note that this method of scoring gives equal weight to each of the eleven principles, regardless of the number of scoring items for each principle.) If combining evaluators’ scores, first determine the average for each principle as measured by each evaluator and then calculate the total average score by adding the average score of each principle and dividing by 11. For example, if one evaluator scored Principle 1 an average score of 2.67, and a second evaluator’s average score was 3.0 and a third evaluator’s score was 2.33, add these three numbers and divide the sum by the number of evaluators ($2.67 + 3.0 + 2.33 = 8.0$ divided by 3 evaluators = 2.67). Do the same for each principle; then, add the averages and divide by 11. (An Excel score sheet that will automatically calculate your scores is available at www.character.org/nsoc.)
7. Some schools choose to represent their scores by using a graph. Below is a sample graph that illustrates a school’s strengths and weaknesses in implementing the principles.



Note for Districts: Special care should be taken in scoring districts, since the instrument speaks more specifically to individual school practice. For the most part, district evaluators should ask the following questions with respect to each of the scoring items/principles:

- ◆ Is the district taking deliberate and effective steps to foster such efforts in its schools?
- ◆ Are a large majority of schools in the district (e.g., at least 65-75%) engaged in successful implementation of such efforts?

Districts should also judge their efforts by using CEP’s *Guidelines for School Districts in Fostering Character Education*. This document is available by calling CEP or may be downloaded from www.character.org/nsoc.

Please feel free to call CEP (800-988-8081) with any questions about the scoring procedure.

Principle #1: Effective character education promotes core ethical values as the basis of good character.

1.1 The school community has agreed upon or given assent to the core ethical values (or virtues, positive character traits, pillars, principles, or thematic words that form an umbrella for ethical content) it promotes in its character education initiative.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ Core ethical values encompass significant aspects of moral life.
- ◆ Choice of values is justified (e.g., as important to a democratic society).
- ◆ Plans exist for continuing reflection and discussion.
- ◆ Administrative and teaching staff have been involved in identifying and/or giving assent to the values.
- ◆ A substantial number of parents have been involved in identifying and/or giving assent to the values.
- ◆ Non-teaching staff have been involved in some demonstrable way.
- ◆ Students have been involved in a developmentally appropriate manner.
- ◆ (For districts): A representative group of district staff, school staff, parents, school board members, and community members has been involved in identifying and/or giving assent to the values.

1.2 The school community develops definitions of its core ethical values in terms of observable behaviors.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ Behaviors clearly connect to the core values.
- ◆ Behaviors defining the values are seen as important by members of the school community (including teachers, students, and parents).
- ◆ Behaviors encompass all of the values and are observable inside and outside the school.
- ◆ Definitions are developmentally appropriate to students.
- ◆ Defining core values can be an on-going process and may involve students, staff, and parents.

1.3 The school has made deliberate and effective efforts to make its core ethical values, the justification for them, and their behavioral definitions widely known throughout the school and parent community.	0	1	2	3	4

The school makes continuing efforts to make the core ethical values (including justification and behavioral definitions) known to the entire school community; for example, core values are

- ◆ Incorporated into the school mission statement, school handbook, and discipline code.
- ◆ Defined at an appropriate developmental level for students.
- ◆ Repeatedly referred to by staff in interactions with students and within instructional activities.
- ◆ Conveyed to parents through newsletters, at school events, etc.
- ◆ Demonstrated to be widely known, as shown by evidence provided by the school.
- ◆ Visually displayed in a developmentally appropriate manner.

Principle #2: Effective character education defines “character” comprehensively to include thinking, feeling, and behavior.

2.1 The school takes deliberate and effective steps to help students acquire a developmentally appropriate <i>understanding</i> of what the core values mean in everyday behavior and grasp the reasons why some behaviors are right and others wrong.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ Staff consistently and proactively address the logic of moral arguments and why core values are desirable.
- ◆ Student discussion includes the sources of and/or justifications for moral values.

2.2 The school takes deliberate and effective steps to help everyone <i>appreciate</i> the core values, reflect upon them, desire to embody them, and become committed to them.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ Staff make consistent and proactive efforts to develop in students a deeply felt commitment to core values (e.g., by developing empathy for others and a sense of responsibility, and through inspirational exemplars in literature, history, sports, the media, etc.)
- ◆ Staff make strong efforts to meet the needs of students for safety, belonging, and autonomy as these form a foundation for developing a commitment to core values.

2.3 The school takes deliberate and effective steps to help students <i>practice</i> the core values so that they become habitual patterns of behavior.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ Staff encourage students to examine their behavior in light of core values, and challenge them to make their behavior consistent with their best understanding of and commitment to core values (e.g., reflection through appropriate use of journal writing, discussion of events in the classroom, adult-child conversations on past or present behavior, etc.).
- ◆ Students receive practice in and feedback on behavioral skills (e.g., setting goals, listening attentively, apologizing, etc.) through the ordinary conduct of the classroom, role plays, cooperative learning groups, and/or other developmentally appropriate activities.

Principle #3: Effective character education uses a comprehensive, intentional, and proactive approach to character development.

3.1 The school is intentional and proactive in addressing character at all grade levels.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ Individual teachers, grade-level teams, and the staff as a whole participate in strategic planning for character education.
- ◆ (For districts): The district has included character education in its strategic plans (e.g., mission statement, goals, objectives).

3.2 Character education is regularly integrated into academic content.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ Teachers highlight core values embedded in academic subject matter (e.g., the virtues historical leaders possessed, character-related themes in literature, the principles of scientific investigation).
- ◆ Teachers provide opportunities for students to address ethical issues that arise within academic subject matter (e.g., whether historical practices were fair and/or just; the ethical considerations of new scientific discoveries, war, social policies and other current events).
- ◆ (For districts:) The district ensures that character education is included in academic curriculum frameworks.

3.3 Character education is a priority in how all classes are conducted.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ Classroom routines address students' need for belonging, autonomy, and competence.
- ◆ Classroom routines are respectful of students and engage them in ways that develop traits such as responsibility, fairness, and caring.

3.4 Character education is infused throughout the school day to include sports and extracurricular activities; core values are upheld by adults and taken seriously by students throughout the school environment.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ Expectations and efforts are communicated and practiced at the start of and throughout the school year in all activities (sports, student clubs) and areas of the school (cafeteria, halls, playing fields, library, school buses, etc.).
- ◆ Members of the school community easily communicate and point to core values in all areas of the school.
- ◆ Character education is manifested consistently across the school setting.

Principle #4: Effective character education creates a caring school community.

4.1 The school makes it a high priority to foster caring attachments between adults and students.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ Students perceive staff as caring.
- ◆ Teachers act effectively as counselors in appropriate areas.
- ◆ Faculty typically attend school events.
- ◆ The school makes provision for students and teachers to meet in social settings.
- ◆ Teachers provide time for extra help in academic work.

4.2 The school makes it a high priority to help students form caring attachments to each other.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ Students perceive the student body as generally friendly and inclusive.
- ◆ Teachers and students create classroom environments in which respect and kindness are the standard (e.g., through class meetings).
- ◆ Creating a sense of safety and belonging is clearly given a priority as high as academic objectives.
- ◆ Educational strategies, such as cooperative learning and cross-age mentoring, encourage mutual respect and appreciation of interdependence among students.
- ◆ Teachers and students note caring acts and give compliments when they occur, correct unkind remarks when they occur, etc.

4.3 The school does not tolerate peer cruelty or any form of violence and takes steps to prevent peer cruelty and violence and deal with it effectively when it occurs.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ The school provides opportunities for positive interactions among students of different classrooms and grade levels.
- ◆ Staff identify and constructively address peer abuse, such as put-downs, racial slurs, insensitive gender remarks, remarks on appearance, economic or social status, etc., in ways that express moral feeling and that address dismay with the behavior (not the student).
- ◆ Staff take specific steps to discourage and deal with bullying through specific processes (e.g., conflict resolution).
- ◆ Incivility toward peers is taken as seriously as such behavior toward adults.
- ◆ Staff make proactive efforts to increase students' understanding of personal, economic, and cultural differences.

4.4 The school makes it a high priority to foster caring attachments among adults within the school community.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ The school identifies language that is unacceptable and enforces a corresponding code of behaviors.
- ◆ Staff members perceive the work environment as positive.
- ◆ Staff members make efforts to develop caring and respectful relationships among themselves.
- ◆ Staff members make efforts to form positive relationships with students' parents and guardians.
- ◆ (For districts): 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.

Principle #5: Effective character education provides students with opportunities for moral action.

5.1 The school sets clear expectations for students to engage in moral action in terms of civility, personal responsibility, good sportsmanship, helping others, and service to school and community.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ Staff model, endorse, teach, and expect good sportsmanship, civility, compassion, and personal responsibility.
- ◆ There are clear guidelines and expectations regarding community service, service learning, and/or other more programmatic opportunities for moral action.
- ◆ These guidelines and expectations
 - a) Are clearly articulated and relevant to students.
 - b) Are frequently communicated to and known by relevant stakeholders (students, teachers, and parents).
 - c) Serve as obligations for the students when appropriate (e.g., mandatory recycling, required community service hours, cross-age mentoring activities implemented on a classroom level).
- ◆ (For districts): The district encourages and sets clear guidelines and expectations for community service and/or service learning and other programmatic opportunities for moral action.

5.2 The school provides students with repeated and varied opportunities for engaging in moral action <i>within the school</i> , and students engage in these opportunities and are positively affected by them.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ The school effectively provides students with opportunities for moral actions within the school by
 - a) Endorsing and encouraging participation in activities like cooperative learning, peer or cross-age tutoring, classroom or student body governance, and service projects or work such as planting and tending a garden, beautifying the school, and helping keep the school clean.
 - b) Providing opportunities that are valued and initiated/directed by students.
 - c) Setting aside school time for supporting, engaging in, and individually and collectively reflecting on moral action.
 - d) Explicitly acknowledging student moral action.
- ◆ The majority of students take advantage of these opportunities and benefit from them.

5.3 The school provides students with repeated and varied opportunities for engaging in moral action <i>in the larger community</i> , and students engage in these opportunities and are positively affected by them.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ The school effectively provides students with opportunities for moral actions by
 - a) Endorsing and encouraging participation in community service work (e.g., working with the elderly, the homeless, or on environmental projects).
 - b) Providing opportunities that are valued and initiated/directed by students.
 - c) Setting aside school time for supporting, engaging in, and individually and collectively reflecting on moral action.
 - d) Explicitly acknowledging the positive consequences of community service and other moral actions in the larger community.
- ◆ The majority of students take advantage of these opportunities and benefit from them.

Principle #6: Effective character education includes a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character, and helps them succeed.

6.1 The academic curriculum provides meaningful and appropriate challenges to students that promote character development throughout the curriculum.	0	1	2	3	4

The academic curriculum

- ◆ Is engaging and interactive.
- ◆ Addresses students' natural interests and questions.
- ◆ Increases their sense of competence.
- ◆ Emphasizes student autonomy (e.g., student-initiated or self-directed projects).

6.2 The school implements a wide range of strategies to accommodate the diverse cultures, skills, interests, and needs of students.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ The school provides adequate and ongoing staff training in learning styles and provides opportunities for teachers to share best practice in diverse instructional strategies.
- ◆ Teachers demonstrate the appropriate use of diverse teaching strategies.
- ◆ Staff engage in accurate and ongoing identification of students' learning needs and differentiate instruction appropriately.
- ◆ All students are valued, respected, and helped to excel, regardless of cultural, racial, gender, or socioeconomic differences.
- ◆ Staff take any special challenges stemming from such differences into account when designing and providing instruction.

6.3 Teachers promote the development of character traits that support students' intellectual growth and academic performance.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ Teachers promote thinking habits (curiosity, truth-seeking, critical thinking, and open-mindedness to new ideas) that lead to intellectual growth in students.
- ◆ Teachers promote work-related habits (perseverance, diligence, self-discipline, and challenge-seeking) that help students do their best work.
- ◆ Teachers promote social habits (honesty, responsibility, collaboration) that help students work together harmoniously (e.g., through cooperative learning and group projects).

Principle #7: Effective character education strives to develop students' self-motivation.

7.1 The school explicitly values good character for its own sake.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ The school's statement on character education explicitly includes mention of moral motivation.
- ◆ Students and teachers demonstrate awareness of the importance of intrinsic moral motivation.

7.2 Staff and students recognize and celebrate the natural, beneficial consequences of acts of character rather than rewarding students with material recognition (behavior modification rewards).	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ Recognition is inclusive of members of the school community (e.g., recognizing the character strengths and unique qualities of each student in a classroom rather than having students earn the title “student of the week”).
- ◆ The school refrains from excessive singling out of students for good deeds or encouraging competition for recognition among students or classrooms.
- ◆ Staff and students recognize and express gratitude to each other in natural settings as part of the everyday life of the school (hallways, classrooms, playing fields, meetings).
- ◆ (For districts): Districts use their public relations programs to focus attention on good character education practices.

7.3 The school's approach to student conduct emphasizes core values within constructive discussion, explanation, and consequences.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ The school provides staff training in developmentally appropriate forms of classroom management.
- ◆ The school discipline code is based on discussion, explanation, and consequences.
- ◆ Consequences are consistent, fair, not physically harmful, and are communicated to and discussed with parents.
- ◆ Staff routinely deal with behavior issues in ways that encourage reflection and self-motivation, offer students opportunities for reparation and moral growth, and do not demean the individual (e.g., positive discipline strategies).
- ◆ Students have a developmentally appropriate role in classroom management and school governance (e.g., participating in the creation of behavioral norms and rules, class meetings, conflict resolution programs, and student governance bodies such as student court).

Principle #8: Effective character education engages the school staff as a learning and moral community that shares responsibility for character education and attempts to adhere to the same core values that guide the education of students.

8.1 All school staff are included in planning, receiving staff development for, and carrying out the schoolwide character education effort.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ All staff—administrators, teachers, counselors, and support staff (office assistants, school nurses, maintenance workers, cafeteria workers, playground and classroom aides, security personnel)—receive training and information on their role in the character education initiative.
- ◆ Administrators, teachers, and counselors receive ongoing staff development (e.g., workshops, conferences, standing committees, regular discussion).
- ◆ Faculty are substantially involved in implementation.
- ◆ Staff value the sharing of ideas and being a learning and moral community.
- ◆ (For districts): The district builds implementation of character education into the assessment of school principals; in turn, the district encourages/requires principals to evaluate integration of character education into their assessments of teachers, counselors, and administrators.
- ◆ (For districts): The district hires central office personnel (e.g., those responsible for administration, counseling, sports, school-to-work, library/media services) and school principals committed to character education and encourages them to incorporate character education into their work.

8.2 Staff model the core values in their interaction with students and each other, and students perceive that they do.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ Staff are courteous to students, as students are expected to be to them; other core values are interpreted in similar ways.
- ◆ Students perceive that staff are modeling the core values.
- ◆ Teachers use core values to reflect on their own behaviors and procedures.

8.3 Regular and adequate time is made available for staff planning and reflection in regard to character education.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ Aspects of the character education initiative appear regularly on the agenda of faculty meetings.
- ◆ Administration provides staff release time for development of promising ideas.
- ◆ (For districts): The district provides regular ongoing staff development in character education and provides funding for substitute teachers so that staff have planning and training time.
- ◆ (For districts): The district stimulates information sharing by providing venues for collaboration among schools; establishing a centralized source of materials, curricula, and other tools; and sponsoring regular conferences/meetings on character education.

Principle #9: Effective character education fosters shared leadership and long-range support of the character education initiative.

9.1 The character education program has leaders, including the school principal, who champion the character education effort.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ The principal's role is pivotal, but an important part of the role is sharing leadership responsibilities with others (e.g., faculty, parents, students, community members).
- ◆ Leadership is demonstrated at multiple levels through
 - a) Articulation of goals and abiding principles.
 - b) Personal example.
 - c) Decisions regarding policies, personnel, and allocation of resources.
- ◆ Leadership stresses that character is integral to the mission of the school and is not merely an adjunct to that mission.
- ◆ (For districts): Character education is established as part of the district's vision and is a shared priority of the district board and district superintendent.

9.2 A leadership group or structure (several linked groups) inclusive of staff, students, and parents guides the ongoing planning and implementation of the character education program and encourages the involvement of the whole school in character-related activities.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ The leadership group may be a character education committee or task force, an existing school committee, or the entire staff if the school is small. A leadership structure may link groups that represent staff, students, and parents respectively.
- ◆ Those who will be affected by particular character-related decisions (e.g., staff, parents, students) have input into those decisions.
- ◆ The school's regular governing mechanisms assume responsibility for management of character-related policies and plans.
- ◆ (For districts): There is a leadership group (or structure) that includes district and school staff.

9.3 Students are explicitly involved in creating and maintaining a sense of community and in other leadership roles that contribute to the character education effort.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ Students play an active role in creating and maintaining classroom standards of behavior.
- ◆ Students carry out responsible roles within the classroom and school community (e.g., classroom monitors, safety patrols, student government, peer mediators, peer helpers).
- ◆ Character-related leadership opportunities are created for students at various levels (i.e., within small learning groups, in the classroom more generally, in the school at large, and in extracurricular and community service activities).
- ◆ Leadership roles are valued by the student body.
- ◆ Students, especially at the secondary level, identify themselves as members of wider communities (state, nation, world) in which they can play positive and contributory roles.

Principle #10: Effective character education engages families and community members as partners in the character-building effort.

10.1 The school engages families in the character education initiative.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ The school provides opportunities for families to become involved in the character education initiative.
- ◆ The school offers workshops and resources on character education and general parenting skills.
- ◆ Parents and guardians are active contributors to, and participants in, school and classroom events.

10.2 The school and its faculty regularly exchange communications with parents and guardians, providing suggestions and activities that help them reinforce the core values.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ Communication and connection with home are initiated at many levels (e.g., individual teachers, departments, extracurricular clubs, principal, district office, PTA).
- ◆ A great variety of techniques are used (e.g., report cards, notes, e-mails, phone calls, newsletters, parent-teacher conferences, group meetings, workshops).

10.3 The school recruits the help of the wider community.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ The school recruits the help of community groups (e.g., businesses, youth organizations, and local government agencies) in promoting character development.
- ◆ (For districts): The district engages a broad spectrum of the community in their character education initiative, with particular focus on involvement of appropriate local government agencies, non-school youth serving organizations, and the business community.

Principle #11: Effective character education assesses the character of the school, the school staff's functioning as character educators, and the extent to which students manifest good character.

11.1 The school regularly assesses (both <i>quantitatively</i> and <i>qualitatively</i>) the character of the school as a learning and moral community to determine its degree of success.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ Assessment is deliberately focused on how effectively the school has implemented its character education plans.
- ◆ The school assesses the impact of character education on academic achievement and shows positive results.
- ◆ The school assesses the impact of character education on school climate and shows positive results.
- ◆ Assessment is based on input from students, faculty, other school staff, and parents.
- ◆ Character education is made a part of schoolwide assessments; i.e., assessment of school success is not limited to academic test scores.

11.2 The staff periodically report on their efforts to implement character education, as well as on their growth as character educators.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ The audiences for this reporting can include students, the full staff, parents, district leaders and policy makers, and relevant community members.
- ◆ Reporting includes structured and informal opportunities to examine and reflect on the data.
- ◆ In-service activities provide staff with a good venue for such exchanges.

11.3 The school assesses student progress in developing an understanding of and an emotional attachment and commitment to the qualities of good character; behavior is assessed in ways that reflect core values.	0	1	2	3	4

- ◆ Student progress is assessed by a variety of approaches (e.g., a character education assessment on student report cards, student-led parent/teacher conferences).
- ◆ Students rate importance of core values in their lives and complete questionnaires on character-related behaviors.
- ◆ Staff collect data on school attendance, academic achievement, volunteering, acts of honesty, discipline referrals, fighting, vandalism, drug incidents, and student pregnancies, etc.
- ◆ Faculty members cooperate to ensure that individual students are getting the best benefits from the overall program and to make changes as appropriate.

MORE RESOURCES. . .

NATIONAL SCHOOLS OF CHARACTER™ Awards

Every year, the Character Education Partnership (CEP) names 10 public and private schools and districts (K–12) as National Schools of Character (NSOC) for their outstanding work in character education. CEP honors these exemplars and showcases their work at the annual CEP National Forum in October in Washington, DC, and in the annual NSOC publication. National Schools of Character receive a monetary grant to enhance their programs and to conduct outreach activities like holding workshops for other educators and mentoring other schools and districts. Some states are now conducting State Schools of Character competitions as a preliminary step to advancing to the NSOC awards. Information about which states are participating is available at www.character.org/nsoc. For information on how your state can become involved, contact CEP. The deadline for NSOC applications is in December.

PROMISING PRACTICES Awards

CEP gives Promising Practices awards to schools and districts for implementing *unique* and *specific* strategies in character education that others may learn from and even replicate. Selected practices are showcased in the annual NSOC book/CD which appears in both published form and online. Promising Practices serve as a resource for those looking for proven ideas on how to improve their school's or district's character education program. If your school or district does not feel ready to apply for the NSOC award but has specific programs to share with others, consider applying online for a Promising Practices award. The deadline for Promising Practices applications is in March.

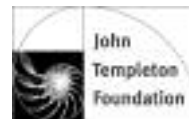
Eleven Principles PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CEP offers staff development *Seminars* and *Institutes* based on CEP's *Eleven Principles Sourcebook*. Both Seminars and Institutes are held in a one- or two-day format. Seminars are tailored to build on a school or district's existing goals and issues and are held at a local site. One-day Seminars provide an overview of the *Eleven Principles* framework with a customized concentration on the foundational first three Principles. Two-day Seminars allow for focused action planning and discussion of assessment strategies. Institutes are held in regional locations for multiple schools and districts and follow a similar format as the Seminars, without the customization. Both Seminars and Institutes are a highly interactive and hands-on experience that is relevant to schools just beginning their character education journey as well as those seeking to sustain and improve their initiatives.

CEP'S Annual NATIONAL FORUM

CEP's annual National Forum recognizes outstanding school and district character education programs with the National Schools of Character awards program every October. The conference is also an occasion to learn about character education research, programs, policy, and hear from fellow practitioners from across the USA and around the world.

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