This Changes Everything
Understanding the value and impact of your school's climate and culture

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“Children are 25 percent of the population but 100 percent of the future. If we wish to renew society, we must raise up a generation of children who have strong moral character. And if we wish to do that, we have two responsibilities: first, to model good character in our own lives, and second, to intentionally foster character development in our young.”
- Tom Lickona
Learning Objectives:
1. Learn how school climate and character education are the "plate" on which all other initiatives must rest.
2. Recognize SEL skills are learned, and therefore need to be taught, practiced, and reinforced.
3. Explore ways to begin or enhance schoolwide character and culture programs.
4. Gain access to valuable resources on topics such as community building, restorative practices, mindfulness, and trauma.
What Character Education is NOT:

one more thing on your plate

- Climate and Culture
- Core Values
- Morning Meetings
- Human Resources
- RTI

- Relationships
- Reflective Practices
- Strategic Planning
- Growth Planning

- Emotional Intelligence
- Mindfulness
- Grit
- Love and Logic

- Growth Mindset
- Core Values
- Reflective Practices

- Mindfulness
- Grit

- Trauma Sensitive Practices
- CASEL

- Restorative Practices
- College and Career Readiness

- Community Circles
- Second Step

- Empathy
- Zones of Regulation

- Community Circles

- Grit
- Grit

- Growth Mindset

- Emotional Intelligence

- Growth Mindset

- CASEL

- Community Circles

- Empathy

- Social and Emotional Learning

- State Standards

- Parental Communication

- Behavior Management

- Achievement

- Parental Communication

- Behavior Management

- Professional Development

- Budget

- Teacher Leadership

- Technology

- Policies

- Attendance

- Curriculum Mapping

- State Standards

- Achievement

- Parental Communication

- Behavior Management

- Professional Development

- Budget

- Teacher Leadership

- Technology

- Policies

- Attendance
What Character Education is:

- Mindfulness
- Empathy
- Trauma Sensitive
- Restorative Practices
- Core Values
- Connection & Relationships
- Values and Citizenship
- Community Building
- Reflective Practices
- Cultural Responsiveness
- Student Engagement
- Social/Emotional Intelligence
- Service Learning
- Student Engagement
- Social/Emotional Intelligence
- Service Learning
- Climate, Culture & Character Education
Character Education is the Plate

The impact of SECD (social/emotional learning and character education):

- Fewer disruptions, more **positive behaviors**
- **Improved test scores**, more **engagement** in learning
- Greater **civility**, **greater teamwork** and **caring**
- Improved **nonviolent** decision-making
- Improved **school climate**
- Stronger student **connection** to schools
- Increase in **attendance**
- **Reduction in bullying**
- Fewer suspensions, at-risk behaviors, discipline referrals
- **More empathy and** better **relationship** skills
- **Healthier life choices**
- Improved on-the-job and **leadership** skills

Source: Dunkelblau (2009), adapted from Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education Training, WCEP
“A growing body of research support that high quality character education can promote academic achievement.” (Benniga, Berkowitz, Kuehn, & Smith, 2006)

Character ed has been shown to reduce school violence and to impact attendance. (Top (2012)

One of the strongest predictors of academic success is the student’s perception of “Does the teacher like me?” (Stutzman, Amstutuz & Mullet, 2005 citing Nelson, Lott & Glenn)

“Positive teacher-student relationships are particularly important for students with self-regulation difficulties on tasks requiring fine motor skills, accuracy and attention related skills.” (Liew et al., 2010)
What is Character Education?

“Character education is the intentional effort to develop in young people the core ethical and performance values that are widely affirmed across all cultures. To be effective, character education must include all stakeholders in a school community and must permeate school climate and curriculum.” - character.org
Social and Emotional Learning Competencies

**SELF-AWARENESS**
- The ability to accurately recognize one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one’s strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a “growth mindset.”
  - Identifying Emotions
  - Accurate Self-Perception
  - Recognizing Strengths
  - Self-Confidence
  - Self-Efficacy

**SELF-MANAGEMENT**
- The ability to successfully regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations — effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.
  - Impulse Control
  - Stress Management
  - Self-Discipline
  - Self-Motivation
  - Goal Setting
  - Organizational Skills

**SOCIAL AWARENESS**
- The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.
  - Perspective-Taking
  - Empathy
  - Appreciating Diversity
  - Respect for Others

**RELATIONSHIP SKILLS**
- The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.
  - Communication
  - Social Engagement
  - Relationship Building
  - Teamwork

**RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING**
- The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others.
  - Identifying Problems
  - Analyzing Situations
  - Solving Problems
  - Evaluating
  - Reflecting
  - Ethical Responsibility
Do kids learn through posters and presenters?
How do we learn character?

Relationships with those around us
- Friends
- Community
- Parents/Caregivers
- Spiritual Leaders
- Teachers

Interactions with the world around us and how it is explained to us
- Media and Messaging
- Role Models
- World Events
- Societal Norms

Consequences of choices

Opportunities for engagement
- Service
- Scouts
- Churches, Clubs

Education, Evidence and Observation
- Curriculum
- Self-directed Learning
- Self-discovery

Environment
- Needs that are met or unmet
Recognize SEL skills are learned, and therefore need to be taught, practiced, and reinforced.
11 Principles of Character Education

1. Each principle outlines vital aspects of character education initiatives that should be considered for comprehensive plan.

2. Curriculum integration to extra-curricular activities; parent and community partnerships to staff development

3. An excellent outline for program planning and can easily be integrated into staff development and self-evaluation

Free Download [http://info.character.org/11-principles-download](http://info.character.org/11-principles-download)
1. The school community promotes **core ethical and performance values as the foundation of good character**.

2. The school defines “character” comprehensively to include **thinking, feeling, and doing**.

3. The school uses a **comprehensive, intentional, and proactive approach** to character development.

4. The school creates a **caring community**.

5. The school provides students with **opportunities for moral action**.

6. The school offers a **meaningful and challenging academic curriculum** that respects all learners, develops their character, and helps them to succeed.

7. The school **fosters students’ self-motivation**.

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.

9. The school fosters **shared leadership and long-range support** of the character education initiative.

10. The school **engages families and community members** as partners in the character-building effort.

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.
Principle 1 - Promotes core ethical values as the basis of good character.

- Students, staff and parents use common language
- Include core values in school’s mission statement
- Grade level and subject area discussions
- Topics at staff meetings
- Bulletin boards, website, student handbook, discipline code, in newsletters
- Support/Non-teaching staff
Principles 2 & 3 — The school defines “character” comprehensively to include thinking, feeling, and doing.  
Principle 4 — The school creates a caring community.

Examples/Implementation
- Greeting students at the door
- Community circles
- Intentional learning relationships
- Restorative practices
- Using positive teacher language
Principle 5 – The school provides students with opportunities for moral action

Examples/Implementation
- Classroom - Peer mentoring
- School - Multi-grade reading buddies
- Extra-curricular - Sportsmanship
- Community - Service Learning
- Identify a need
- Doing something that helps the community or the school
- Tying it into the curriculum
- Opportunity for reflection
Principle 10 — The school engages families and community members as partners in the character-building effort.

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.

Examples/Implementation

- Including and sharing core values with families
- Consider how you are connecting with families
- Meeting parents where they are - physically, emotionally and educationally
- Conducting surveys
- Evaluating perceptions
Why “do” character education?

- Transforms schools, improve school culture
- Increases achievement for all learners
- Develops global citizens
- Restores civility
- Provides effective solutions to ethical and academic issues that are growing concerns
- Prevent anti-social and unhealthy behaviors
- Improve job satisfaction and retention among teachers
- Strengthens communities
WCEP HELPS BROWN DEER MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL ACHIEVE MEASURABLE RESULTS

BACKGROUND

Brown Deer Middle/High School

The Brown Deer Middle/High School was selected to participate in the WCEP project due to its commitment to improving student outcomes and its leadership in the community. The school is located in a suburban area with a diverse student population, and it has a strong tradition of academic excellence.

STUDENT-LED LESSON PLANS

The Brown Deer Middle/High School implemented student-led lesson plans as a way to engage students in the learning process. These plans allowed students to take on leadership roles in their own education, which helped to increase their motivation and ownership of their learning.

The Brown Deer Way: Why it Works - A Key Theme

The Brown Deer Way is a set of principles and practices that guide the school in its focus on character development and academic excellence. These principles include respect, responsibility, integrity, and community, which are integrated into the school’s curriculum and daily activities.

Read the full case study >>
Explore ways to begin a schoolwide character and culture programs

- Download the 11 principles of Character Education guide.
- Assess where you are now - gather data!
- Start with core values - include all stakeholders. (parents, students, community, non-teaching staff, etc.)
- Value what your staff is already doing. Look at existing initiatives to see where they overlap. (Don’t recreate the wheel.)
- Focus on staff - develop a shared language, staff should intentionally model the behaviors.
- ALL stakeholders should communicate about common language, behavior, curriculum alignment and initiatives.
- Be willing to make sacrifices, but if you feel kids deserve it, you have to be willing to take this hits.

Lead with heart
Cultivate Relationships and build community.
Be authentic and reflective.
Explore ways to enhance schoolwide character and culture programs.

- Think about whether or not character education is an “add on” or “the plate.”
- Assess where you are now - gather data.
- Make it easy/focus on what you are already doing.
- Consider eliminating activities or programs that don’t add value.
- Engage community and families.
- Hire and train specifically for character.
- Involve your students (Make space for youth voices).
- Begin cultivative and using a shared language.
- Staff should intentionally model the behaviors.
- Create a matrix based on what you’re already doing.
- Consider applying for a Promising Practice through WCEP.

Be COURAGEOUS In your LEADERSHIP!
Fail Forward.
Gain access to valuable resources on topics such as community building, restorative practices, mindfulness, and trauma.

More resources:
https://www.alverno.edu/laccs/resources.php
The 2018-19 LACCS cohort is forming!

- Nine monthly sessions, starting with a kick-off in September and commencing with graduation in May.
- At the end of the series, each school team will have developed a plan to infuse character education into their schools. To facilitate the plan development, the series combines input from:

2018 character education conference registration is now open.