Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education from Character Education Partnership

There is no single script for effective character education, but there are some important basic principles. The following eleven principles serve as criteria that schools and other groups can use to plan a character education effort. They can be used in conjunction with CEP’s Character Education Quality Standards to evaluate available character education programs, books, and curriculum resources. Character Education Partnership has its website at http://www.character.org.

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

**Principle 2:** Defines “character” comprehensively to include thinking, feeling and behavior.

**Principle 3:** Uses a comprehensive, intentional, proactive, and effective approach to character development.

**Principle 4:** Creates a caring school community.

**Principle 5:** Provides students with opportunities for moral action.

**Principle 6:** Includes a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character, and helps them to succeed.

**Principle 7:** Strives to foster students’ self-motivation.

**Principle 8:** 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.

**Principle 9:** Fosters shared moral leadership and long range support of the character education initiative.

**Principle 10:** Engages families and community members as partners in the character-building effort.

**Principle 11:** Evaluates the character of the school, the school staff’s functioning as character educators, and the extent to which students manifest good character.

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“Intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.”

-- Martin Luther King, Jr.