



Beaufort County School District Character Education Program

The Beaufort County School District's Character Education program was formed to support parents' efforts in developing good character in their children. The schools counselors identified a list of character words and definitions deem important regardless of a person's political leanings, race, gender or religious convictions. Additionally, the character education word list aligns with the First Tee Nine Core Values that represent some of the many inherently positive values connected with the game of golf.

The purpose of the Character Education program is to integrate good character traits into the total school environment, as well as into the community. These words and definitions focus on the attitudes and personal qualities that build a foundation for success in life and work. These character traits are imbedded throughout the curriculum and are a daily focus of both students and school staff members.

In addition to the Character Education program that exists in every school in Beaufort County, a student will be selected as Character Education Student of the Month. The student selected will compete for Beaufort County Character Education Student of the Month and will be recognized by the superintendent at the first School Board Meeting of each month.

Frequently Asked Questions about Character Education

1. What is character education?

Character education is an educational movement that supports the social, emotional and ethical development of students. It is the proactive effort by schools, districts, and states to instill in students important core, ethical and performance values such as caring, honesty, diligence, fairness, fortitude, responsibility, and respect for self and others. Character education provides long-term solutions to moral, ethical, and academic issues that are of growing concern in our society and our schools. Character education teaches students how to be their best selves and how to do their best work.

Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education:

- ⊕ Promotes core ethical and performance values
- ⊕ Teaches students to understand, care about, and act upon these core ethical and performance values.
- ⊕ Encompasses all aspects of the school culture
- ⊕ Fosters a caring school community
- ⊕ Provides opportunities for moral action
- ⊕ Supports academic achievement
- ⊕ Develops intrinsic motivation
- ⊕ Includes whole-staff involvement
- ⊕ Requires positive leadership of staff and students
- ⊕ Involves parents and community members
- ⊕ Assesses results and strives to improve

Character education has always been an essential part of our schools' mission. In fact, since the founding of our nation's public schools, character development was always an integral part of schooling along with academics. Today's character education movement is a re-emergence of that important mission.

2. Why do we need character education? As Dr. Thomas Lickona, author of *Educating for Character*, stated, "Moral education is not a new idea. It is, in fact, as old as education itself. Down through history, in countries all over the world, education has had two great goals: to help young people become smart and to help them become good."

Since children spend about 900 hours per year in school, schools must be proactive in helping develop supportive environments where students develop into healthy, caring, hard-working men and women. In order to create the caring and respectful schools and communities we all want, we must be intentional and comprehensive in educating for character.

3. Is character education as important as academics?

The social, emotional and ethical development of young people is just as important as their academic development. It is, in fact, the precursor to academic achievement. As Theodore Roosevelt stated, "To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society." After all, we know that good workers, citizens, parents, and neighbors all have their roots in good character.

4. How do we know character education works?

Schools that infuse character education into their curricula and cultures, such as CEP's National Schools of Character, find improved academic achievement, behavior, school culture, peer interaction, and parental involvement. They see dramatic transformations: pro-social behaviors such as cooperation, respect, and compassion are replacing negative behaviors such as violence, disrespect, apathy, and underachievement. And when these positive attitudes and behaviors are present, students are better able to commit themselves to their work, which paves the way for perseverance, diligence, and ultimately, increased academic achievement.

Some specific examples of research conducted on character-based programs include:

In a study of four schools using Positive Action, the average number of behavioral incidents (including violence and substance abuse) requiring discipline referral dropped by 74 percent after the program was implemented for one year and by an average of 80 percent during the next six years. Additionally, absenteeism decreased between 30 to 60 percent, and achievement scores improved from an average of the 43rd to the 71st percentile range after the first year of implementation, and to an average of the 88th percentile after two to nine years.

5. Isn't character education just another "add-on" that contributes to teachers' workloads? Character education is not an "add-on." It is, instead, a powerful and necessary method of school reform. Character education helps educators fulfill their fundamental responsibility, preparing young children for their future, by fostering caring, respectful, achievement-minded school environments.

6. How much time each day/week is needed for character education?

Character education should not be relegated to a "character education class" that is conducted periodically, but should be infused throughout the structures and processes of the entire school curriculum and culture.

7. Can character education work at all grade levels?

Although it is important to set a strong foundation during earlier grades and to reinforce that foundation during the latter grades, character education can be initiated at any grade level.

8. Shouldn't parents be the primary character educators? Developing character is first and foremost a parental responsibility. The task, however, must be shared with schools and the broader community. Young and old alike regularly voice concern about the challenge of raising ethical, responsible children. As such, parents and communities are increasingly looking to schools for assistance.

9. Who decides which character education traits are emphasized? Each school community should reach consensus on which values are taught. To be effective, school based character education programs need broad support from all stakeholders in the community –educators, parents, community leaders, youth service groups, businesses, and faith and charitable groups.

Effective character education initiatives nationwide have shown that, despite differences, schools and communities can join together around a commitment to ethical and performance values. We know that there are some things that we all value – for ourselves and for our children. We want our children to be honest and hard-working. We want them to respect those different from themselves. We want them to make responsible decisions in their lives. We want them to care about their families, communities, and themselves.

10. Who teaches character education in a school? Every adult in a school is a character educator by virtue of interaction with students. Regardless of whether a school has formalized character education, all adults serve as role models. Students constantly watch as adults in the school – teachers, administrators, counselors, coaches, cafeteria aides, and bus drivers – serve as models for character – whether good or bad.

11. How does a school implement character education? Comprehensive, effective character education begins when members of a school, along with the local community, come together to determine the core values that they share. These values then become the foundation for all that the school does – curriculum, teaching strategies, school culture, and extra-curricular activities. Character education is then infused into the broader community.

12. The following words listed were selected by the professional school counselors of Beaufort County School District as the character education words for the upcoming school year:

Word List	Month
Friendship/Kindness	August 2015
Acceptance	September 2015
Courage/Tolerance	October 2015
Respect/Gratitude	November 2015
Compassion	December 2015
Perseverance	January 2016
Honesty/Integrity	February 2016
Self-Control	March 2016
Forgiveness	April 2016
Responsibility/Cooperation	May 2016

Character Education Word Definitions:

Acceptance

The action or process of being received as adequate or suitable, typically to be admitted into a group or received by others.

Caring

Showing understanding of others by treating them with kindness, compassion, generosity and a forgiving spirit.

Citizenship

Social responsibility in action; being law abiding and involved in service to school, community and country; the qualities that a person is expected to have as a responsible member of a community

Compassion

A feeling of wanting to help someone who is sick, hungry, in trouble, etc; sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others;

Confidence

Reliance or trust. A feeling of self-assurance

Cooperation

The process of working together to the same end; situation in which people work together to do something; to collaboration, joint action, combined effort, teamwork, partnership,

Courage

Doing the right thing in face of difficulty and following your conscience instead of the crowd.

Fairness

Practicing justice, equity and equality. Cooperating with one another. Recognizing the uniqueness and value of each individual within our diverse society.

Forgiveness

To stop feeling anger toward (someone who has done something wrong): to stop blaming (someone)

Friendship

The emotions or conduct of friends; the state of being friends; relationship, close relationship, attachment, mutual attachment, association, bond, tie, link, union

Honesty

Telling the truth, admitting wrongdoing. Being trustworthy and acting with integrity.

Integrity

A firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic values. Being honest, trustworthy and incorruptible.

Judgement

The ability to make a decision or form an opinion. A decision reached after consideration

Kindness

The quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate; kindliness, kindheartedness, warm heartedness, affection, warmth, gentleness, concern and care

Patriotism

A love for and loyalty to one's country.

Perseverance

Pursuing worthy objectives with determination and patience while exhibiting fortitude when confronted with failure.

Respect

Showing high regard for an authority, other people, self and country. Treating others as you would want to be treated. Understanding that all people have value as human beings.

Responsibility

Being accountable in word and deed. Having a sense of duty to fulfill tasks with reliability, dependability and commitment.

Self-discipline

Demonstrating hard work controlling your emotions, words, actions, impulses and desires. Giving your best in all situations.

Self-Control

The ability to have control over your feelings or actions oneself, in particular one's emotions and desires or the expression of them in one's behavior, especially in difficult situations.

Sportsmanship

Observing the rules of play and winning or losing with grace.

Beaufort County School District

Character Education Student of the Month

Rationale:

By creating a Student of the Month Program, Beaufort County School District hopes to celebrate individual achievement that supports the social, emotional and ethical development of students.

Criteria for nomination:

A school administrator, teacher or school counselor may nominate a student for Character Education Student of the Month based upon any or all of the following criteria:

- o Academic performance
- o Marked improvement in grades
- o Exemplary attendance
- o Cooperation
- o Leadership
- o Overall achievement
- o Consideration to others
- o Outstanding attitude/disposition
- o Community involvement/service
- o Other: _____

A written explanation must be submitted to the principal as to why the student should be selected for the award. Teachers are encouraged to consider the students' contributions up to that point, rather than a specific start and end date timeline.

Process:

- 1.) An email will be sent out to the faculty and administration asking them to nominate students to be considered for the Character Education Student of the Month award. Nominations will be submitted to the school's administrator or designee by the 15th of each month.
- 2.) The school's principal or designee will coordinate a three-member committee to select the Character Education Student of the Month. A committee made up of faculty members convenes roughly two days prior to the announcement.
- 3.) The committee will select one student from the nominees.
- 4.) The Character Education Student of the Month award recipients will be announced by the principal via loudspeaker on the first Thursday of the following month. The student selected will be submitted to the District for consideration for the District Character Education SOTM.

5.) The Character Education Student of the Month recipient will be celebrated during the following month after the announcement is made (ex. throughout the month of October, "September Character Education Student of the Month" will be celebrated)

a. Recipients will be recognized in the following ways:

- Honored by the Board of Education during a public session
- Presented a certificate of commendation by the superintendent
- Name posted on the school's marquee
- Photo displayed in front lobby and main office
- Photo and Name posted on the school's website
- Photo and name posted on the district's website
- Name and bio feature in the school and community newspaper

6.) Once selected by the Character Education Student of the Month committee, the name of the students will be passed onto the school's principal for final approval. Administration may reject the committee's selection because of disciplinary issues, attendance concerns, etc. In this case, the committee will consider another candidate.

7.) The committee may also approach the teachers of the students selected for that month. This is to ensure that the best candidate is selected and that there are no underlying issues throughout his/her daily schedule.

8.) Students who are selected as the Character Education Student of the Month will not be able to earn the award again during the current school year.

9.) Nominations do carry over from month to month and re-nominations are welcome.

10.) SOTM can be awarded at every school level (elementary, middle and high school)

11.) Only those who win the award will be recognized; other nominees will not be disclosed outside the nomination committee.

Beaufort County School District's Character Education Student of the Month

1). The principal will submit the original application along with a cover letter of the student selected as the School's Character Education Student of the Month. The application must be received at the Student Service Department no later than the 25th of each month.

2). The Student Service Chief Officer will convene a committee comprised of three senior staff members to select BCSD Character Education Student of the Month. One student from each region (Northern/Southern) will be selected as the District's Character Education Student of the Month. The students selected will be announced by the 28th of each month and will be recognized at the first board meeting of each month.

Character Pledge

*I pledge to do my best to
be of good moral
character and to obey the
rules and laws of my
family, my school, my
community, my state and
my country*

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Beaufort County School District