



CRITICAL EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES:

CHARACTER COUNTS! MODEL STANDARDS FOR ACADEMIC, SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOOL CLIMATE

Historically, formal standards directing and guiding the educational mission focused almost exclusively on defining content outcomes in progressive age and grade developmental stages. In the past decade, however, the acknowledged objectives of education have been broadened as the result of a number of parallel reform movements vigorously urging educators to explicitly supplement content standards with outcome objectives concerning the development of critical and creative thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving abilities; social and emotional life skills, ethical character traits, and practical knowledge and competencies reflecting the demands of the modern life and workplace.¹

Domains of Student Development. Thus, whether included in formal standards or not, educational institutions are expected to provide students with the knowledge, skills, values and character traits in three overlapping domains of development: 1) *The Academic Domain* – concerned with instilling educational values, beliefs and attitudes; the development of cognitive skills and abilities and learning-related character traits; and other qualities and strategies to help children succeed academically and reach their intellectual potential; 2) *The Social/Emotional Domain* – concerned with instilling self-awareness and self-management skills, interpersonal social skills and critical positive life skills and character traits; and 3) *The Character Domain* – concerned with instilling or strengthening core ethical values and moral character traits.

The School Climate Domain. Educational institutions are concerned with the quality and character of a learning environment reflecting the norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, engagement, leadership practices, and organizational structures that encompass school life.

Objectives. These standards present a comprehensive, integrated statement of critical educational outcomes deemed necessary to prepare students to: 1) Succeed in school, including college or other post-secondary school education; 2) Succeed in the workplace and their careers; 3) Live happy, worthy and fulfilling personal lives; and 4) Become engaged, responsible and productive citizens. To accomplish this, these Standards identify four forms of educational outcomes: 1) Knowledge – what students should know and understand; 2) Skills – what students should be able to do; 3) Values – what students should value and believe; and 4) Traits – what characteristics and attributes of character students should possess.

These standards are the result of a project of the nonprofit, nonpartisan Josephson Institute of Ethics, designed to provide states, school districts and individual schools with a comprehensive, fully integrated guide to the achievement of ambitious but realistic educational objectives in the academic, social/emotional, character and school climate domains. The Institute is committed to continually updating, and where appropriate, revising these Model Standards in response to experience and the suggestions and advice of thoughtful educators and experts in the field.

1These Model Standards, integrating critical outcomes from each of these domains, draw heavily upon the hands-on experience of thousands of educators involved in the CHARACTER COUNTS! schools and student development improvement efforts, as well as the most current research and theories regarding the whole child, school climate, connectedness, behavior modification, the growth mindset, executive function, research-based instructional strategies, the teaching of high level learning skills; as well the research, reports, recommendations and standards presented by the National Governor's Association's COMMON CORE Standards Initiative, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills' Framework for 21st Century Learning: Student Outcomes and Support Systems, the Illinois State Standards for Social and Emotional Learning, the Kansas State Standards for Social, Emotional, and Character Development; ASCD Whole Child Initiative and the work of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL); Character Education Partnership, the Institute for Excellence & Ethics, the Center for the 4th and 5th Rs, and the National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention.

The standards in the Academic, Social and Emotional and Character Domains represent an understanding of the desired educational outcomes for students in K-12th grade. Realizing that some of the desired traits are acquired by students in the later grades, (secondary schools), these standards are identified on the chart with an S.

ACADEMIC DOMAIN

A1. Motivated and Committed Learners

A1.1. Curiosity

A1.2. Personal Growth and Lifelong Learning

A2. Confident and Diligent Learners

A2.1. Growth Mindset

A2.2. Learning From Mistakes

A3. Responsible, Engaged, Autonomous, and Connected Learners

A3.1. Dedication to Education

A3.2. Full Engagement in Learning Process

A3.3(S). Self-Directed Learners

A3.4(S). Resourceful, Discerning Researchers

A3.5(S). Versatile Learners

A3.6. Connection to School Community

A4. Knowledgeable, Logical, Critical and Creative Thinkers

A4.1. Acquire, Remember Knowledge

A4.2. Understand Knowledge

A4.3. Apply Knowledge

A4.4. Analyze, Evaluate (Critical Thinking)

A4.5(S). Create, Innovate (Synthesis)

A4.6. Concentrate

A4.7(S). Perceptive, Observant

A4.8(S). Openness

A4.9(S). Intellectual Integrity

A4.10(S). Intellectual Independence

A4.11(S). Intellectual Humility

A4.12(S). Pursuit of Wisdom

A5. Effective Problem Solvers and Decision Makers

A5.1. Rational Decision Making

A5.2. Ethical Decision Making

A5.3. Effective Decision Making

A5.4(S). Best Possible Result

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DOMAIN

SE1. Self-Awareness

SE1.1. Emotions and Their Impact

SE1.2. Traits and Attributes

SE1.3. Values, Beliefs, Attitudes, Mindsets

SE1.4(S). Self-Acceptance

SE1.5(S). Concept of Happiness and Success

SE1.6(S). Capacity to Be a Change Agent

SE2. Self-Management

SE2.1. Expressing Emotions

SE2.2. Self-Discipline

SE2.3(S). Managing Stress, Anxiety, Depression, and Other Negative Emotions

SE2.4. Resilience and Courage

SE2.5. Flexibility

SE2.6. Patience and Poise

SE2.7. Self-Improvement

SE2.8. Setting Goals

SE2.9. Planning

SE2.10. Managing Time

SE2.11. Organization

SE3. Social Awareness and Relationship Skills and Traits

SE3.1. Social Awareness

SE3.2. Empathy

SE3.3(S). Remorse

SE3.4. Positive Relationships

SE3.5. Effective Communication

SE3.6. Leadership

SE3.7. Collaboration and Teamwork

SE3.8(S). Conflict Management

SE4. Success Skills and Attitudes

SE4.1(S). Executive Function

SE4.2. Diligence

SE4.3(S). Conscientiousness

SE4.4. Perseverance

SE4.5. Self-Confidence

SE4.6. Self-Motivation and Action

SE4.7. Positivity

SE4.8. Gratitude

SE4.9. Forgiveness

SE4.10. Technological Literacy

SE4.11.(S) Financial Literacy

CHARACTER DOMAIN

C1. Commitment to Character and Ethics

C1.1. Good Character - Components

C1.2. Importance of Character

C1.3. Responsibility for Character

C1.4. The Six Pillars of Character

C1.5(S). Ethical Concepts and Terms

C2. Trustworthiness

C2.1. Integrity

C2.2. Honest Communications

C2.3. Honest Actions

C2.4. Belief That Honesty Pays

C2.5. Promise-Keeping & Reliability

C2.6. Loyalty

C3. Respect

C3.1. Treating Others With Respect

C3.2. The Golden Rule

C3.3. The Basics of Respect

C3.4. School Climate

C3.5(S). Respecting Privacy

C3.6(S). Respecting Others' Autonomy

C4. Responsibility

C4.1. Compliance: Doing What Is Required

C4.2. Ethics: Doing What Should Be Done

C4.3. Consequences for Their Words

C4.4. Consequences for Actions

C4.5(S). Developing and Using Positive Attitudes and Life Skills

C4.6. (S) Self-Reliance and Prudent Money Management

C4.7. Learning From Experience

C4.8(S). Being Rational and Reflective

C4.9. Healthy Choices

C5. Fairness

C5.1. The Basics of Fairness

C5.2. Making Fair Decisions

C5.3(S). Proportionality

C5.4(S). Complexity of Fairness

C6. Caring

C6.1. The Basics of Caring

C6.2(S). Caring & Other Ethical Duties

C7. Good Citizenship

C7.1. Civil Rights

C7.2. Civil Responsibilities

C7.3. Respect for Authority & Law

C7.4(S). Participation in Democratic Process

C7.5(S). Improving School Climate

C7.6. Environmental Protection

SCHOOL CLIMATE DOMAIN

CL1 Positive Culture

CL1.1 Welcoming and accessible

CL1.2 Respectful and supportive relationships

CL1.3 High expectations and standards

CL1.4 Growth mindset

CL1.5 Participatory decision-making

CL1.6 High staff morale

CL2 Engagement.

CL2.1 Parent involvement

CL2.2 Student engagement

CL2.3 Staff consensus and commitment

CL2.4 Administrator presence and participation

CL2.5 Professional development opportunities

CL3.0 Quality Instruction

CL3.1 Effective instructional strategies

CL3.2 Collaborative teachers

CL3.3 Proactive interaction with parents

CL3.4 Useful and productive student assessments

CL3.5 Feedback and accountability

CL4.0 Inspirational Leadership

CL4.1 Inspires commitment to vision

CL4.2 Establishes a strategic plan

CL4.3 Effective and efficient management

CL4.4 Trust and confidence of constituents

CL4.5 Regular communication

CL5.0 Safety and Positive Behaviors

CL5.1 Disciplinary rules, policies and strategies

CL5.2 Security regarding outside threats

CL5.3 Emergency preparedness

CL5.4 Detect and deal with weapons, drugs and alcohol

CL5.5 Prevention of dangerous conditions

CL6.0 Positive Learning Environment

CL6.1 Attractiveness and maintenance of physical plant

CL6.2 Instructional areas conducive to learning

CL6.3 Adequate physical space in classrooms

CL6.4 Adequate resources for instruction

CRITICAL EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY: MODEL STANDARDS FOR ACADEMIC, SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOOL CLIMATE

ACADEMIC DOMAIN EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

This domain is concerned with instilling educational and academic knowledge and values and developing in each student the cognitive abilities, learning skills, and personal traits that will help them: 1) succeed in school, (including college or other post-secondary school education); 2) succeed in the workplace and their careers; 3) Live happy, worthy and fulfilling personal lives; and 4) become engaged, responsible and productive citizens.

A1. MOTIVATED AND COMMITTED LEARNERS

Students value education and are eager, committed learners who: 1) love learning as a source of personal enjoyment and growth; 2) believe that learning and education will enrich and improve their personal lives; and 3) are motivated to do well in school, graduate, and seek higher educational opportunities.

A1.1 Curiosity

Students demonstrate the trait curiosity and an enthusiastic desire to understand more about themselves, others and the world around them and acquire new knowledge and skills by:

1. Asking questions;
2. Self-directed reading and research; and
3. Exploration and experimentation.

A1.2. Personal Growth and Lifelong Learning

Students believe in the importance and value of continuous self-improvement, personal growth and life-long learning and are committed to:

1. Increasing their knowledge, understanding and skills through reading and advanced education; and
2. Broadening their horizons through travel and other personal experiences.

A2. CONFIDENT AND DILIGENT LEARNERS

Students are confident that with diligent effort they can learn what they need to know and develop the personal attributes they need to succeed in school and the workplace. (Instead of thinking, "I can't", they think, "I can't . . . yet.").

A2.1. Growth Mindset

Students approach their learning and other aspects of their lives with a growth mindset believing that with focused effort and diligent practice (i.e., repetition or exercise of an activity to acquire or polish a skill) they can:

1. Increase their basic intellectual abilities (i.e., intelligence), including the learning and thinking skills enabling them to master new and difficult concepts;
2. Develop life skills, personal attributes and moral virtues that enhance success in all aspects of their lives. (e.g., self-discipline, self-awareness, empathy, initiative, positivity, perseverance, resilience, integrity, responsibility); and
3. Adopt positive attitudes and reject negative emotions and mindsets.

A2.2. Learning From Mistakes

Students demonstrate a positive perspective about mistakes and unsuccessful efforts, believing that they are not failures, but a necessary and unavoidable part of learning.

1. Students understand the concept of "failing forward," the idea that there are lessons to be learned from every experience and that this new knowledge will help them succeed the future. Students always ask themselves: "What can I learn from this?" and;
2. Students understand that persistence, patience and self-discipline are often necessary to learning and they are willing to work hard and struggle when necessary to attain success.

The growth mindset is a concept developed by Dr. Carol Dweck positing that all basic abilities, including intelligence and talents, can be developed through diligent effort. Dr. Dweck's research shows that students who believe their intelligence and abilities are fixed and permanent (e.g., "I'm just no good in math," "I can't learn a foreign language.") are much less likely to tackle challenging tasks and persist in learning efforts when they find the concepts difficult. In contrast, students who adopt the growth mindset show greater motivation, study harder, get better grades in school and higher scores on standardized tests because they are more likely to focus on improvement instead of worrying about how smart they are. They also demonstrate greater persistence in the face of difficulties because they have confidence that their efforts will pay off and that they will learn more and get smarter.

A3. RESPONSIBLE, ENGAGED, AUTONOMOUS, AND CONNECTED LEARNERS

Students accept and demonstrate personal responsibility for their education by becoming autonomous (self-directed) learners fully engaged in all aspects of the educational process and firmly connected to the school community.

A3.1. Dedication to Education

Students demonstrate personal responsibility for seizing educational opportunities. They show dedication and creativity in overcoming obstacles to learning and graduating.

A3.2. Full Engagement in the Learning Process

Students demonstrate full engagement in their learning by:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. Being organized; | 7. Taking good notes; |
| 2. Coming to class prepared; | 8. Asking for help; |
| 3. Attending all classes; | 9. Completing all assignments; |
| 4. Being punctual; | 10. Establishing a study routine; |
| 5. Being attentive; | 11. Using a planner or calendar; and |
| 6. Participating in class; | 12. Taking care of themselves (e.g., good diet, adequate sleep, exercise, and a healthy life style). |

A3.3. Self-Directed Learners

Students demonstrate responsibility for their learning by becoming autonomous and resourceful learners who start and complete their school work without the need for direct supervision or external pressure.

A3.4. Resourceful and Discerning Researchers

Students demonstrate the ability to conduct broad-based, independent and discerning research (including persistent inquiry of teachers and the use of libraries and the internet) to answer questions that interest them (e.g., How tall was Abraham Lincoln) and provide the source material for major papers and projects.

A3.5. Versatile Learners

Students understand that individuals can learn in a variety of ways (i.e., the three modalities of listening, seeing and doing) and through diverse teaching strategies including lectures, experiential, problem or inquiry-based, Socratic dialogue. While they understand their personal preferences, they are able to learn by all methods.³

A3.6. Connected to School Community

Students strive to form positive relationships with teachers, counselors, support staff, and to classmates in their school community. They understand that this substantially improves their chances of doing well in school and avoiding dangerous and unhealthy behavior.

1. Believe they belong and their teachers, counselors and others in the school community care about them;
2. School staff demonstrates an understanding of the importance of positive and caring relationships to successful learning, and works to build mutually respectful relationships across the school community; and
3. Participate in school activities or clubs.

Research demonstrates that individual students learn differently (e.g., left-brain or right-brain dominance, a preference for auditory, visual, or kinesthetic learning) and respond better to certain teaching strategies (e.g., lecture, discussion, or inquiry-based activities). However, students must develop the willingness and capacity to learn in all modalities and through various methods, as their teachers may not have the time to individualize the learning process to each student's preferences.

A4. KNOWLEDGEABLE, LOGICAL, CRITICAL, AND CREATIVE THINKERS

Students demonstrate progressively complex intellectual abilities to acquire, remember, understand and apply knowledge as well as higher order thinking skills (e.g., ability to analyze, evaluate, and create) especially in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.⁴

COGNITIVE COMPETENCIES

A4.1. Ability to Acquire and Remember Knowledge

Students demonstrate the ability to acquire, recall, and retain progressively complex forms of information enabling them to:

1. Remember facts and lists; b) correctly identify and label;
2. Develop a substantial vocabulary and correctly state definitions of terms, the content of theories and wording of rules.
3. Working Memory. Students utilize their thinking skills which focus on memory-in-action while utilizing memory recall during relevant activities and on-going tasks and making application of the acquired knowledge

A4.2. Ability to Understand Knowledge

Students demonstrate the ability to understand (i.e., comprehend) the meaning and significance of facts, assertions, ideas, concepts and theories conveyed orally, experientially or in the form of expository (e.g., essays, editorials, biology textbook) or literary (novels, plays poems) writings by:

1. Restating, paraphrasing, explaining and summarizing facts, definitions, methods, rules, theories and concepts (including the ability to prepare and deliver explanatory and persuasive arguments and presentations)
2. Drawing distinctions and perceiving differences and similarities (i.e. comparing and contrasting) in images, terms, concepts and theories
3. Understanding the literal meaning and the implications of information conveyed in all forms of nonfiction writings
- including expository (e.g., textbooks, diagrams, and graphs) and purely functional documents (e.g., bus schedules, instruction manuals, schematics, blueprints)
4. Interpreting the literal and symbolical meaning of various forms of literary (fictional) writing
5. Illustrating or simplifying information with pictures, diagrams, charts and graphs; and
6. Translating verbal material to mathematical formula or visual representations (and vice versa).

A4.3. Ability to Apply Knowledge (Working Memory)

Students demonstrate the ability to apply their knowledge in new situations and in useful ways (e.g., using a currency conversion formula to determine the price of an object) including retrieving and applying separate strands of retained knowledge as needed to successfully perform tasks (i.e., this is working memory, a critical executive function skill).

³ Educators are well aware of brain research suggesting students have dispositions to be right or left-brain learners, prefer one or more of the classic teaching modalities (auditory, visual, and kinesthetic) and respond better to certain teaching methods. Though teachers should seek to individualize instruction modalities and methods where possible, students must develop the willingness and capacity to learn in all modalities and various methods as they often will not have alternatives.

⁴ These standards recognize that cognitive skills are developmental (i.e., the capacity to engage in higher order learning skills generally progresses as the child matures). Thus, expected outcomes must be aligned to the developmental stage and individual capacities of each student. The standards incorporate but re-organize Bloom's classic six-level taxonomy of cognitive development (knowledge, understanding, application, analyses, syntheses and evaluation) as well as specific performance-oriented complex thinking and learning competencies embodied in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills' Framework for 21st Century Learning: Student Outcomes and Support Systems. The specific learning objectives of this section include both measurable product outcomes (e.g., performance of particular mental tasks measured in relation to specific levels of competency) and process outcomes (e.g., learning objectives focus on learning how to learn and success is evaluated in relation to the student's past performance and potential rather than an objective measure of competence).

A4.4. Ability to Analyze and Evaluate (Critical Thinking)

Students demonstrate increasingly sophisticated analytical and evaluation skills and a disposition toward critical thinking including the ability to:

1. Organize, classify, and categorize information;
2. Identify the organizational structure, component parts and essential elements of written and oral communications and creative works;
3. Identify and take in account factors that might affect the accuracy and validity of their own personal beliefs and conclusions;
4. Challenge, question and test the accuracy and validity of recommendations, claims and assertions by identifying and taking into account: a) internal inconsistencies; b) logical flaws; c) unproven or unstated assumptions; d) the existence of contradictory evidence and opinions; e) the currency and pertinence of data and; f) factors that bear on the objectivity and reliability of the sources of information (e.g., credentials, prejudice, bias, attitudes, motivations, and conflicts of interest);
5. Evaluate the relevance and weight assigned to specific evidence or arguments by: a) distinguishing between facts, opinions, speculations, and feelings and; b) considering the expertise, personal knowledge, character and credibility of the source; and
6. Identify and describe strengths and weaknesses and constructively express informed evaluative judgments (i.e., criticism) concerning the merit of oral communications (e.g., speeches, debates), writings (e.g., news reports, editorials, research studies), performances (e.g., acting, singing) and artistic works (e.g., sculptures, paintings, symphonies).

A4.5. Ability to Create and Innovate (Synthesis)

Students demonstrate the ability to create and innovate by building on existing knowledge to create innovative, imaginative, and ingenious solutions to problems and propose new and original works, organizational structures, theories, explanations plans and designs:

1. Students demonstrate originality and an ability to “think outside the box” to devise fresh and unique ideas to solve problems and to create something that is new or unusual by: a) re-classifying, re-categorizing, re-organizing and rearranging information; b) assembling, combining, integrating and reconciling divergent theories and approaches; c) supplementing existing theories and explanations with new perspectives or approaches
2. Students demonstrate an ability to apply creative approaches and solutions to real situations in a practical manner
3. Students demonstrate the ability to use their imaginations and employ various creative thinking techniques (e.g., brainstorming, mind-mapping) to generate ideas and innovations to improve current practices or develop wholly new approaches; and
4. Students demonstrate the desire to continually improve their creations by reflecting on and evaluating the effectiveness of their decisions and the quality of their work and they demonstrate a willingness to make changes to achieve better results.

SKILLS, ATTRIBUTES AND TRAITS THAT ENHANCE LEARNING

A4.6. Ability to Concentrate

Students demonstrate understanding of the importance of attentiveness and the ability to concentrate (i.e., give focused, intense, undivided attention) in class and while studying by avoiding distractions and focusing on the task of learning.

A4.7. Perceptive and Observant

Students demonstrate perceptiveness, keen observation skills, and discernment while reading, listening and watching. They pay attention to detail, noting anomalies or inconsistencies, asking questions to resolve doubts and discovering connections and patterns in seemingly unrelated events.

A4.8. Openness

Students demonstrate open-mindedness by their willingness to:

1. Listen to and consider divergent and opposing viewpoints and alternative ideas and approaches; and
2. Challenge and re-assess their own assumptions, beliefs and conclusions and, where appropriate, adapt to new circumstances, adopt a different perspective and alter their conduct to achieve a desirable result.

A4.9. Intellectual Integrity

Students demonstrate intellectual integrity by:

1. Being sincere (i.e., not using knowledge or argumentation skills to assert or defend positions they don’t sincerely believe); and
2. Their willingness to admit errors or logical weaknesses and change their beliefs and positions in response to new evidence or arguments.

A4.10. Intellectual Independence

Students demonstrate the trait of intellectual independence by thinking for themselves, rather than adopting thoughts and values of peers or other external sources without critically evaluating their merit.

A4.11. Intellectual Humility

Students demonstrate the trait of intellectual humility by accepting the possibility that:

1. There is often more than one right answer;
2. What they think they know might be incorrect or incomplete; and
3. Their judgments as to the weight assigned to certain information might be distorted by conflicts of interest, prejudices and attitudes.

A4.12. Pursuit of Wisdom

Students appreciate and seek wisdom (an advanced mental competence that combines intelligence, experience and common sense to create the ability to make wise and sound judgments that reflect a deep understanding of facts, opinions, theories and human nature).

A5. EFFECTIVE PROBLEM SOLVERS AND DECISION-MAKERS

Students understand that their competence and character will be judged in terms of the choices they make and they demonstrate the ability to employ critical and creative thinking skills to solve problems and make rational, ethical and effective decisions that produce the best possible result.

A5.1. Rational Decision Making

Students demonstrate the ability to apply various decision-making strategies and employ a rational process that avoids rationalizations and elevates logic over emotions and facts over feelings including:

- 1) Identifying long-term and short-term objectives;
- 2) Devising alternative courses of action to achieve the objectives;
- 3) Foreseeing potential consequences to each person or group effected by the decision (i.e., stakeholder);
- 4) Choosing the course of action most likely to produce the optimum (i.e., best possible) result; and
- 5) Monitoring the effectiveness of the decision and making adjustments necessary to achieve the objectives.

A5.2. Ethical Decision Making

Students demonstrate the ability to evaluate the ethical dimension of their choices and a commitment to make ethical decisions.

1. Students demonstrate discernment, the ability to choose the best course of action in terms of ethical principles and discipline, the strength to do what should be done even when it is difficult, risky or personally costly;
2. Students understand that they are morally and legally accountable for the consequences of their decisions (including a decision not to decide);
3. Students evaluate their options in terms of core ethical principles (e.g., honesty, loyalty, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, kindness and good citizenship) and they eliminate any option that is either illegal or unethical; and
4. Students understand that in situations where ethical principles clash (e.g., their grandmother gives them an ugly sweater, the ethical principle of honesty conflicts with the ethical principal of kindness) the best possible result is to choose the option likely to create the greatest good for the greatest number in the long run.

5 Many advocates of social and emotional learning list responsible decision making as a core skill within the social/emotional domain. We have unpacked the concept of responsible decision making and included the intellectual and analytical aspects of this skill within the academic domain and the responsibility aspects within the character domain.

6 Examples of classic decision-making strategies: 1) Role Model Test – do what you think a person you admire for ethics and wisdom would do. (e.g., Mother Teresa, your grandmother); 2) Publicity Rule – only do what you would do if you knew your decision would be known by everyone (e.g., reported on the 5 o'clock news or on Facebook); 3) Positive Outcome Test (consequentialism) – when ethical values conflict (e.g., where the truth would be unkind) choose the best possible result by determining which option is most likely to produce the most long-term good and do the least harm for the most people; 4) Moral Absolutism (Moral Imperative) standard – on matters involving core ethical convictions, treat ethical obligations as absolute and do nothing that would violate any ethical principle.

A5.3. Effective Decision Making

Students demonstrate the ability to the effectiveness of their choices.

1. Students believe that an effective decision accomplishes the desired result without causing unintended and undesirable consequences.
2. Students believe that an effective decision, accomplishes the desirable result with the least amount of time and resources (i.e., it is efficient).

A5.4. Best Possible Result

In making decisions and solving problems seek to achieve the best possible result by choosing a course of conduct that is legal, ethical and effective (i.e., it accomplishes desired results efficiently and avoids unintended consequences that undermine the outcome or create new problems).

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DOMAIN

This domain is concerned with non-cognitive skills and traits including self-awareness and self-management skills interpersonal social skills, and positive life skills and traits

SE1. SELF-AWARENESS

Students demonstrate self-awareness and the skills of introspection and reflection by identifying and understanding their emotions, values, attitudes, motivations, mindsets and personal attributes.

SE1.1. Traits and Attributes

Students identify and accept who they are, including their dominant personality traits (e.g., outgoing or introverted, timid or bold) and they accurately assess their physical, mental, emotional and moral attributes (including strengths they can build on and weaknesses they can improve).

SE1.2. Emotions and Their Impact

Students identify and understand the emotions they experience, the sorts of situations that cause them, and how their emotions influence their actions.

1. Students monitor their emotions including their tendency to impact the way they interpret and respond to situations, opportunities and challenges; (e.g., fear or insecurity could cause them to negatively interpret an offer of help),
2. Students recognize and guard against a tendency to exaggerate in their own minds the severity and duration of the consequences of mistakes, embarrassing moments, failures, rejections and other negative events (e.g., "I can never face them again." "They will hate me." "Everyone thinks I'm stupid.").
3. Students who experience severe mental states that result in prolonged depression and /or the possibility of harming themselves or others know to seek help from trusted adults or mental health professionals.

SE1.3. Values, Beliefs, Attitudes and Mindsets

Students identify and understand their core values (i.e., what is really important to them), beliefs, opinions, attitudes and mindsets that influence their feelings and actions.

SE1.4. Self-Acceptance.

Though students are committed to continuous self-improvement, they are sufficiently comfortable "being themselves" to resist peer or other external pressure to change into someone they are not and don't want to be.

SE1.5. Capacity to be a Change Agent

Students demonstrate the ability to accurately assess current conditions (i.e., the way things are) and the ability to envision how things could be better (i.e., the way things ought to be) and they recognize their capacity to be a positive change agent in their families, school, community and the world.

SE1.6. Positive Concept of Happiness and Success

Students adopt a positive concept of personal happiness and success that goes beyond wealth, status, and fun. Students experience happiness and feel successful when they:

1. Count their blessings so as to experience and express gratitude for all the things in their lives that give them comfort, pleasure, pride or joy;
2. Derive pleasure and pride from their achievements;
3. Pursue their full potential (self-actualization) by acquiring knowledge and wisdom, creating fulfilling personal relationships and engaging in activities that broaden their horizons and enrich their minds; and
4. Finding value and gratification in selfless service and making a positive difference in the lives of others.

SE2. SELF-MANAGEMENT

Students understand that they have the power and responsibility to regulate their emotions, attitudes and actions and they strive to strengthen the traits of self-discipline and self-control so they can take full advantage of their strengths and virtues and effectively resist negative emotions and impulses.

SE2.1. Expressing Emotions

Students demonstrate the ability to express positive and negative emotions at appropriate times and in appropriate ways that strengthen their relationships and advance their goals.

SE2.2. Self-Discipline

Students demonstrate the trait of self-discipline (i.e., will power) by:

1. Doing what they need to do without procrastination or excuses; and
2. Overcoming urges for immediate gratification and refraining from doing things they want to do that could have long-term negative consequences (e.g., eating unhealthy foods, using alcohol or drugs).

SE2.3. Controlling Negative Emotions

Students recognize and resist negative emotions (including ongoing feelings of depression or anxiety and spontaneous urges and impulses) that impair their judgment, make them unhappy or could lead them to engage in self-defeating, unhealthy, unethical or illegal conduct.

SE2.4. Coping Strategies

Students demonstrate a basic understanding of and an ability to apply proven strategies to help them endure, cope with, manage or eradicate durable negative emotions (including persistent negative thinking, stress, anxiety and depression) that can cause suffering, impair judgment, or jeopardize relationships⁷

SE2.5. Self-Improvement

Students are committed to continuous self-improvement and believe they can improve their social and emotional skills and their chances of being happy and successful by identifying and eliminating bad habits, strengthening weak attributes and developing positive traits such as self-discipline, perseverance, resilience, optimism.

1. Students seek and constructively receive positive and negative feedback and demonstrate the ability to alter their attitudes and behavior in response to valid criticism; and
2. Students learn from their mistakes and failures.

⁷These standards impose a duty on educators to provide students with tangible tools and strategies to help them cope with common emotional traumas they are likely to face including depression, anxiety, grief, resentment, feelings of inferiority and feeling they don't belong. If these skills cannot be effectively taught in the school context, educators should provide students with guidance on where they can get such information. Proven effective strategies to students relax and reduce the negative impact of negativity, stress, anxiety and depression that could damage their health and mental well-being, impede their effectiveness, or cause them to make unwise decisions include: 1) Reframing, a recognized strategy to replace negative thoughts with positive ones: (a) identify the negative belief or assumption behind the negative emotion (e.g., "I can't do this and if I try my class will ridicule me"); (b) challenge the belief or assumption (e.g., "I have done this sort of thing before and no one is going to care enough to ridicule me."); and (c) consciously replace the negative thought with a positive one by looking for a positive aspect of even a negative outcome (e.g., "I can do it but even if I fail I will learn something and I don't have to worry about this anymore." 2) Mindful meditation; 3) Distraction - inducing students to engage in activities that focus the mind on something else; 4) Physical exercise; 5) Listening to upbeat music; 6) helping others; and 7) Seeking support of friends and family.

SE3. SOCIAL AWARENESS AND RELATIONSHIP SKILLS AND TRAITS.

Students employ interpersonal and social skills and traits (e.g., empathy, sensitivity to the feelings and needs of others, the ability to communicate, etc.) to guide appropriate behavior and create positive relationships and meaningful connections to family members, classmates, peers, teachers, and others.

SE3.1. Social Awareness

Students demonstrate social awareness by:

1. Demonstrating the ability to identify what another person is feeling (e.g., happy, sad, disappointed, confused, angry) what another person intends or wants (e.g., whether an offensive comment was accidental or malicious; when a person is seeking approval) and are able to "read between the lines" and extract unstated messages conveyed by the words chosen, the tone of voice, facial expressions, body language, silence, and other nonverbal cues (e.g., knowing someone is upset even when they insist they are fine);
2. Demonstrating an understanding of how the unique backgrounds, experiences, values, ideologies, and characteristics of individuals influence the way these individuals interpret and react to events and communications;
3. Accurately assessing how they are perceived by others (e.g., they can tell whether they are valued, trusted, respected, liked);
4. Perceiving the reaction of others to their statements and own nonverbal communications; and
5. Recognizing when a friend requires adult help to cope with severe emotional distress.

SE3.2. Empathy

Students experience and display the trait of empathy (the disposition and ability to sympathetically understand and personally identify with the emotional states, needs and feelings of others) by consoling, comforting, calming, supporting and encouraging others.

SE3.3. Remorse

Students understand the importance to relationships of feeling and expressing sincere remorse to those they have wronged. They accept responsibility and apologize for injuries and offenses caused by their actions and they seek to make amends.

SE3.4. Positive Relationships

Students seek to establish and maintain healthy, positive, mutually gratifying personal relationships with their teachers, classmates and others as a source of support, comfort, companionship, and intellectual stimulation.

1. Students demonstrate a willingness to alter their attitudes and conduct when necessary to reduce or prevent disharmony, generate respect and trust, and increase intimacy (provided such changes do not require them to compromise their values or integrity); and
2. Students understand that meaningful and lasting friendships often require unselfishness, patience, understanding, acceptance and loyalty.

SE3.5. Effective Communication

Students demonstrate the ability to send, receive and correctly interpret information, ideas, thoughts, desires and needs by both verbal and nonverbal communication methods including the ability to be assertive without being offensive or arrogant.

SE3.6. Leadership

Students demonstrate the ability to build trust, inspire confidence, generate motivation and positively influence the beliefs and behaviors of individuals and groups by the use of reasoned argument, persuasion, inspiration, negotiation and setting an example. Leadership skills include the ability to encourage and empower others with constructive criticism and timely praise, organize groups and build teams, mediate conflicts, build consensus, and understand and articulate the thoughts of a group.

3.7. Collaboration and Teamwork

Students demonstrate the ability and willingness to pursue common goals as part of a team, constructively participate in cooperative learning, and communicate effectively in cross-cultural and multi-lingual settings with diverse styles, views and backgrounds.

3.8. Conflict Management

Students demonstrate the ability to employ strategies to anticipate, avoid and de-escalate conflicts and formulate and implement peaceful resolution of disputes.

SE4. SUCCESS SKILLS AND ATTITUDES

Students demonstrate and continuously seek to enhance the values, skills, and traits that increase personal happiness and the successful achievement of their academic, personal and career goals.

SE4.1. Executive Function

Students demonstrate executive function, the ability to employ a multitude of crucial academic, social and emotional skills in performing tasks, sometimes in new and chaotic settings.⁸

SE4.2. Diligence

Students derive pleasure and pride from a job well done by pursuing excellence in all they do. They acknowledge it is their duty and responsibility to do their very best while valuing the importance of effort, taking education seriously, following through on commitments, and working hard.

SE4.3. Self-Confident

Students demonstrate confidence in their abilities and inner resources to succeed and endure difficulties, failures and other forms of adversity. In social situations they are assertive and willing to state their opinions despite the risk of disapproval, criticism, or rejection.

SE4.4. Initiation and Action

Students demonstrate the ability to motivate themselves to begin a task and to independently generate ideas, responses, or problem-solving strategies.

1. Students understand that there can be no success without action and that they must be bold, proactive and decisive in the pursuit of their plans, goals, dreams and responsibilities; and
2. Students do not procrastinate.

SE4.5. Positivity

Students demonstrate the trait of positivity by choosing to be relentlessly optimistic, enthusiastic, hopeful and cheerful. Students sustain their positive outlook based on the following beliefs:

1. Students believe that a positive attitude produces positive results – positive people are more likely to achieve their goals, feel successful, have good relationships, have better health and live longer than those with negative outlooks;
2. Students believe that happiness is a state of mind not a circumstance or fact; (i.e., if they think they are happy, they are) and that “nothing is either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.” (Shakespeare); and
3. Students believe that there are positive aspects (i.e., the silver lining) in all experiences and that they can characterize any experience in terms of its positive aspects (e.g., after a fire destroying most of his possessions, a positive person can feel genuinely fortunate and grateful that no one was hurt).

SE4.6. Gratitude

Students demonstrate the trait of gratitude by consistently identifying, experiencing and expressing thankfulness for the good things in their lives (i.e., they count their blessings) and they invariably and graciously express gratitude for gifts, favors, compliments and services received. (e.g., positive people see the glass as half full and grateful people are thankful for the half they have rather than resentful about the half they don't).

SE4.7. Perseverance

Students demonstrate the trait of perseverance by continuing to perform their responsibilities and pursue their goals with vigor and tenacity despite frustrations, mistakes, setbacks and other obstacles that make their task difficult or seem impossible. They resist temptations and pressures to give up or quit, choosing instead, to persist as long as they are able.

SE4.8. Resilience

Students demonstrate mental resilience by drawing on their positivity and inner strength to muster the courage to bounce back and try again with confidence and optimism despite major disappointments, failures and misfortunes (including the pain and grief of personal traumas and tragedies). Students also deal positively with failure and learn from adversity (See A2.2)⁹.

SE4.9. Forgiveness

Students recognize that resentments, regrets and grudges diminish their ability to enjoy their lives and can prevent them from moving forward. They demonstrate the ability to forgive the person who wronged them and let go of their negative feelings so they can get on with their lives.

SE4.10. Flexibility

Students recognize the potential of unexpected and undesirable changes in circumstances that can cause distress and hinder their ability to perform (e.g., a new teacher in the middle of a semester, a death or divorce in the family) and they demonstrate the traits of adaptability and flexibility by adjusting their attitudes, approaches or actions in order to cope with and get the best possible result from the new situation.

SE4.11. Time-Management

Students know basic principles of organizational and time-management strategies and use these strategies to manage their responsibilities effectively and efficiently.

SE4.12. Goal-Setting and Planning

Students demonstrate the ability to formulate and prioritize short-term and long-term school, career and life goals and specific objectives to help them reach their goals and they make specific and realistic plans to achieve their goals.

SE4.13. Organization

Students demonstrate the ability to organize their work and possessions (e.g., notebooks and school papers, their lockers) in an orderly and efficient manner to enhance their productivity, efficiency and success.

SE4.14. Technology Literacy

Students demonstrate competence in the ability to choose, learn and safely and ethically use various current and emerging technologies to communicate socially and professionally, conduct research, acquire diverse perspectives and gain new knowledge and skills that will enhance their analytical and critical thinking skills.

SE4.15. Financial Literacy

By the time they graduate high school, students demonstrate a basic understanding of basic financial transactions and the complexities of responsible management of their financial resources, and the value of being prudent, skeptical and well-informed when making significant financial decisions especially if they involve borrowing money or living beyond their means.¹⁰

8 There are multiple lists of the skills included in executive functioning but all are included in one form or another in these standards: remembering and applying learned information (i.e., working memory), self-awareness, self-monitoring and self-control (sometimes referred to as inhibition), concentration, goal-setting, planning and prioritizing, organizing, time-management and flexibility. The concept underlying executive function is that students must employ these skills, sometimes simultaneously, in a seemingly infinite variety of real-life settings filled with distractions and demands that require concentration and flexibility. If we think of each skill as a musical instrument, we must think of real-world functioning as a performance by an orchestra. Each student must develop the ability to be the conductor of that orchestra, using all the instruments in a way that produces good, quality music.

9 Resilience (often called grit) consists of mustering the will and ability to bounce back from adversity, failure and defeat. A person's level of resilience often determines who succeeds and who fails in school, the workplace, the athletic field and the cancer ward. Resiliency can be strengthened through conscious effort. Ultimately, resilience is a form of positivity, it's a mindset, a way of looking at one's experiences that permits individuals to not only cope with adversity, but to build success on the foundation of the adversity.

10 The range of relevant financial information students should know is extensive: how tax deductions affect earnings, requirements concerning the payment of taxes; how to interpret complicated sales offers (e.g., "buy 2 get 1 free") and compute the actual cost of products and services; how to use of checks and balance a checkbook, how to use credit cards and calculate interest charges; how loans and interest work and the nature and cost of insurance. They should also have some knowledge of bankruptcy, financial risks and consequences of gambling.

CHARACTER DOMAIN

This domain is concerned with educational outcomes that help students develop the constellation of knowledge, values, skills, traits and conduct patterns that define a universal concept of good moral character. Successful efforts to build good character will result in a safe, caring and respectful school climate that provides students with standards of right and wrong and instills in them ethical consciousness, commitment and competencies that will help them achieve personal, school, and career goals; live happy, worthy and fulfilling lives; and become engaged, responsible and productive citizens.¹¹

C1. COMMITMENT TO CHARACTER AND ETHICS

Students understand the personal and social importance and the basic terminology and concepts of character and ethics.

C1.1. Components of Good Character

Students understand that good character consists of attributes reflecting positive moral values, traits, dispositions, habits and attitudes and that their character (i.e., what they are inside) will define them, shape what people think of them (i.e., their reputation) and determine how they are likely to act (e.g., will they be generous or indifferent to a person in need, kind or cruel to a person who made a mistake, honest or devious in dealing with others?).

C1.2. Importance of Character

Students understand that good character is more important to success, meaningful relationships, self-respect, and the esteem of others than other commonly valued attributes including intelligence, beauty, talent, money, and status. Character not only defines who they are, it determines their future.

C1.3. Responsibility for Character

Students understand that their character is a product of their values and choices (the formation of their character lies in their own hands). Students accept and demonstrate personal responsibility to create and improve their character by conscientious efforts to strengthen their commitment and adherence to ethical values and principles.

C1.4. The Six Pillars of Character®

Students understand that ethical beliefs and actions are the foundation of good character (i.e., character is ethics in action) and they seek to develop and display the virtues and traits arising from universal ethical values referred to as **The Six Pillars of Character**: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and good Citizenship.

C1.5. Knowledge of Ethical Concepts and Terms

Students understand that the concepts of character and ethics refer to principles that establish standards of right and wrong that define morality and prescribe how a good person should behave. They believe that:

1. There is a difference between universal ethical values (beliefs about virtue and morality consistent across time and cultures) and personal ethical values (personal beliefs about right and wrong that are not universal because people of character disagree on whether they establish ethical duties for everyone (e.g., beliefs that certain behaviors are immoral -- nudity, gambling, drinking, hunting));¹²
2. Ethical duties (i.e., moral obligations) are different from, and sometimes more demanding and important than, legal duties. In fact, in some cases, civil disobedience; and (i.e., deliberate and open violation of the law such as defying laws requiring segregation based on race); and
3. Ethics are different than values. Values is a much larger concept embracing all forms of deeply held beliefs that determine what is right and wrong. To behave ethically is to behave in a manner consistent with what is right or wrong. Ethics refers to standards of conduct and how a person should behave.

¹¹ Prominent character education advocates such as the Character Education Partnership and The Center for the 4th and 5th Rs define character as including two distinct sorts of qualities: moral character and performance character. They explicitly include qualities such as perseverance, self-discipline and diligence as goals of character education. These Model Standards agree that these are important qualities to be developed by schools but we treat the performance-centered attributes as success skills within the social and emotional domain. We limit the character domain to moral and ethical qualities.

¹² Many people are passionate about the rightness of their position on these types of issues but the success of efforts to develop the core character traits on which there is agreement (e.g., honesty, respect, justice, compassion, etc.) depends on scrupulous avoidance of suggesting that people who disagree with their viewpoint do not possess good character. The crucial objective here is to teach students to formulate their own beliefs on such topics, but to treat those who believe otherwise with respect.

C2. TRUSTWORTHINESS

Students develop and demonstrate the character trait trustworthiness. They understand that trust is an essential ingredient in meaningful and lasting relationships as well as school and career success and they strive to earn the trust of others by demonstrating the ethical virtues of integrity, honesty, promise-keeping and loyalty.

C2.1. Integrity

Students demonstrate integrity by adhering to ethical principles, acting honorably and assuring that there is consistency between their beliefs, words and actions. They safeguard their integrity and demonstrate their character by exercising the moral courage to do the right thing even when it is difficult or detrimental to their relationships, social standing, careers or economic well-being (i.e., they do the right thing even when it costs more than they want to pay).

C2.2. Honest Communications

Students recognize the central role honesty plays in generating trust and they demonstrate their honesty in their communications in three ways:

1. Truthfulness. Students are truthful; everything they say is true to the best of their knowledge (i.e., they do not lie);
2. Sincerity. Students are sincere. This means they always convey the truth as best they can by avoiding all forms of accidental or intentional deception, distortion or trickery (e.g., it is dishonest to tell only part of the truth in an effort to create a false impression or deliberately omit important facts with the intent to create a false impression); and
3. Candor. Students know that certain relationships (e.g., parent-child, teacher-student, best friends) create a very high expectation of trust. In these relationships, honesty requires them to be candid and forthright by volunteering information to assure that they are conveying the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth (e.g., a student who accidentally spills soda on a school computer must voluntarily tell the teacher without being asked; a student who breaks her mother's favorite vase must tell her mother voluntarily).

C2.3. Honest Actions

Students demonstrate honesty by honoring the property rights of others (they do not steal) and playing by the rules in sports and other activities (they do not cheat).

C2.4. Belief That Honesty Pays

Students believe that honesty and integrity will help them succeed in school and life and strengthen their relationships; they reject common rationalizations, justifying lying and cheating as false and short-sighted (e.g., one has to lie or cheat in order to succeed, everyone cheats, it's only cheating if you get caught).

C2.5. Promise-Keeping, Reliability, Dependability

Students demonstrate trustworthiness by being reliable and dependable (i.e., being a person others can count on), being cautious about making promises and commitments and conscientious about keeping the promises and commitments they make.

C2.6. Loyalty

Students demonstrate trustworthiness by being loyal, standing up for, being there for, and being faithful to their friends, family, school and country. Proper demonstrations of loyalty include not disclosing embarrassing information or secrets confided in them in trust (unless keeping the secret could result in serious harm) and refraining from gossip that could hurt feelings or damage reputations or relationships. Loyalty is not an excuse to justify lying or other unethical conduct.

C3. C3. RESPECTFULNESS.

Students believe that the well-being and dignity of all people is important simply because they are fellow human beings and they treat every individual with respect, judging them on their character and ability without regard to race, religion, sexual orientation, political ideology, gender, age, or other physical or personal characteristics.

C3.1. Treating Others With Respect

Students understand that they are not morally required to respect everyone in the sense of holding them in high esteem, but they are required to treat everyone with respect regardless of their personal assessment of the person's character or worth (e.g., we treat criminals with respect, not because they deserve it, but because of who we are).

C3.2 The Golden Rule

Students understand the universal "Golden Rule" (do unto others as you would have them do unto you) and apply it as a standard of respect.¹³

C3.3. The Basic Dos of Respect

Students demonstrate respect by:

1. Being civil, courteous, and polite (i.e., they use good manners);
2. Refraining from offensive and disrespectful profanity, insults and gestures;
3. Listening respectfully to others even if they think what's being said is wrong or foolish;
4. Paying attention to the well-being of others and striving to make them feel comfortable and welcome; and
5. Learning about and treating with respect the customs and traditions of people who come from different cultures.

C3.4. Respectful and Kind School Climate

Students demonstrate respect by seeking to create and support a kind, caring emotionally and physically safe and respectful school climate. They refrain from and discourage others from engaging in violence, threats, intimidation and other conduct intended or likely to cause physical injury, emotional pain, humiliation, embarrassment, shame or a feeling of being left out or excluded. This includes:

1. Unwelcome physical touching (i.e., they keep their hands to themselves);
2. Cruel, unkind or deliberately hurtful or embarrassing gossip;
- and
3. Physical or cyber bullying, harassment, and mean-spirited teasing or taunting.

C3.5. Respecting Privacy

Students demonstrate respect by acknowledging and honoring each other's right to privacy and personal space, including the right to determine whether, how and when information about their personal lives and thoughts will be revealed (e.g., it is disrespectful to read another's diary, look through their back pack, hack their Facebook page, or eavesdrop on their conversations).

C3.6. Respecting Autonomy of Others

Students demonstrate respect by acknowledging and honoring the desire and right of others to govern themselves (i.e., autonomy), make decisions about their lives and be free from oppressive and offensive behavior and unwanted interference in their lives. Students demonstrate respect for the autonomy of others by:

1. Taking the desires, opinions, perspectives, values and goals of others seriously;
2. Refraining from repetitive arguments, tirades, rants, insults, ridicule, manipulation or coercion trying to cause others to change their opinions or actions; and
3. Providing others with the information they need to make informed judgments about their own lives rather than concealing the information to advance their own goals or to shield them from potential bad choices (e.g. Suppose an old boyfriend of your best friend gives you a note to give to your friend but you think it would be a terrible idea if your friend started communicating with him again – the principle of autonomy says you should deliver the note.).

¹³ The Golden Rule (referred to as the rule of reciprocity in philosophical literature), though often associated with Christianity, has deep roots in every major religion and culture starting with Confucius in 557 B.C. "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others." The common positive formulation of the concept: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" is accepted worldwide and should not be considered simply as a religious precept.

C4. RESPONSIBILITY

Students demonstrate the trait of responsibility by taking ownership of their lives and acknowledging their power to choose what they think (including their attitudes and mindsets), say and do and their accountability for the consequences of their choices.

C4.1. Compliance: Doing What Is Required

Students accept responsibility to do what they are required to do by their parents, teachers, coaches and other adults who have legitimate authority to regulate their conduct and by the students' own promises and commitments.

C4.2. Ethics: Doing What Should Be Done

Students accept responsibility to do what they should do based on their personal values and universal ethical principles including The Six Pillars of Character® (Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Caring, Fairness and Citizenship).

C4.3. Consequences for Their Words

Students accept responsibility for the consequences of what they say, recognizing that their words can have serious and lasting impact on others (e.g., insults can impact self-image and revealing secrets can destroy relationships) and they demonstrate this responsibility by seeking to affirm, support and encourage others rather than humiliate, discourage or demean them.

C4.4. Consequences for Their Actions

Students accept responsibility for the consequences of their actions and inactions, recognizing obligations to:

1. Foresee and avoid harmful outcomes, including unintended but predictable consequences;
2. Help others in need (e.g., charity); and
3. Protect others from harm or abuse (e.g., stand up for a student who is bullied).

C4.5. Developing and Using Positive Attitudes and Life Skills

Students acknowledge their responsibility enhance their chances of success in school and life, the quality of their relationships and their own well-being and happiness by:

1. Consciously choosing positive attitudes and mindsets (including optimism, enthusiasm, gratitude, and cheerfulness) and rejecting self-defeating attitudes (e.g., pessimism, cynicism, defeatism, and hopelessness) See SE 2.6; and
2. Developing critical self-management, social and success skills traits (SE2, SE3, SE4) including: self-discipline, resiliency, perseverance, stress management, organization and time management, planning and goal-setting, initiative, flexibility, poise, patience, communication, collaboration and an uncompromising commitment to excellence.

C4.6. Self-Reliance and Prudent Money Management

Students demonstrate the trait of self-reliance by striving to live independently, relying on their own resources, capabilities, judgment, and emotional strength, rather than depending on others to do things for them or tell them what to think or feel. To achieve self-reliance, students:

1. Manage their affairs so they can pay their own way and not be a burden on others; and
2. Live within their means, avoiding debt and other obligations that may be beyond their ability to satisfy or generate unhealthy pressure.

C4.7. Learning From Experience

Students accept their responsibility to review and learn from all experiences and to hold themselves accountable to determine what they could have done differently that would have improved the result and what they should do in the future.

C4.8. Rational and Reflective

Students demonstrate responsibility by being rational (using reason and logic to make or justify decisions) and reflective (i.e., thinking ahead to anticipate the consequences of choices and thinking back to draw lessons from what happened) and use critical thinking and decision-making skills to avoid rationalizations and excuses and make rational, prudent choices.

C4.9. Healthy Choices

Students demonstrate responsibility by making healthy choices to protect their well-being by eating well, getting sufficient sleep and exercise and by refraining from the use of illegal drugs and other intoxicating or mind-altering substances; abusing prescription drugs; using alcohol or tobacco; engaging in cutting or other self-abusive practices, over-eating, anorexia, bulimia, etc.

C5. FAIRNESS

Students strive to be fair and just in all their actions.

C5.1. Basic Dos and Don'ts of Fairness

Students:

1. Take turns.
2. Play by the rules.
3. Give due credit to others.
4. Ask for and take only their fair share. (i.e., what is due you).

Students don't:

1. Claim credit for the work of others.
2. Recklessly or falsely blame or accuse others; and/or
3. Take advantage of another's mistakes or ignorance.

C5.2. Making Fair Decisions

In making decisions that affect others, students demonstrate the trait of fairness by:

1. Being open minded and objective;
2. Giving everyone affected by a decision the chance to tell their side of the story;
3. Considering the merits of all evidence relevant to a just resolution;
4. Being impartial; and
5. Consciously setting aside personal feelings (bias or favoritism) that might interfere with objectivity.

C5.3. Proportionality

Students understand that the principle of fairness requires that imposed consequences for misconduct is proportional to the harm caused (i.e., the more serious the harm, the more serious the consequence) so that "the punishment should fit the crime" (it's neither too lenient nor severe).

C5.4. Complexity of Fairness

Students demonstrate the ability to identify alternative theories for determining what is or is not fair in the way benefits and burdens are distributed.¹⁴

¹⁴ There are five major alternative theories of fairness: 1) Equality – everyone should get equal shares regardless of other factors; 2) Work – only those who worked should receive benefits; 3) Effort – shares should be allocated in proportion to effort (those who try hardest should get the most). 4) Seniority – benefits should be distributed in order of age or seniority (the oldest or the person who has been around longest gets priority treatment). 5) Productivity – benefits should be distributed in proportion to the productivity of the person (the best performers get the most).

C6. CARING

Students understand that caring -- including the virtues of compassion, kindness, benevolence, altruism, charity, generosity and sharing — is the heart of ethics and they strive to demonstrate a concern for the well-being of others by displaying compassion for those in pain or need by providing support in the form of donations and/or personal service.

C6.1. Basic Do's and Don'ts of Caring

Students accept their moral duty to be caring and demonstrate caring by:

1. Being kind, compassionate and empathetic to everyone (even those who don't seem to deserve it);
2. Expressing support and sympathy at appropriate times in appropriate ways;
3. Being charitable in judging others by assuming good intentions and by being forgiving and merciful;
4. Being charitable to causes and individuals; and
5. Not being
 - a) cruel;
 - b) indifferent or apathetic;
 - c) callous; and
 - d) unforgiving.

C6.2. Caring Moderates Other Ethical Duties

Students understand that the virtue of caring frequently interacts with other ethical principles requiring them to be careful that:

1. Honesty is not causing them to be unnecessarily hurtful or offensively blunt; (e.g., telling a person their speech was absolutely awful);
2. In seeking to impose justice, they do not miss opportunities to be merciful and forgiving;
3. While respecting another's privacy, they do not condone or ignore dangerous and harmful conduct; and
4. Their sense of responsibility is proportionate to their actual level of authority and moral duty and that they do not ignore their own needs.

C7. GOOD CITIZENSHIP

Students demonstrate good citizenship by fulfilling their civic and social responsibilities and contribute to the well-being of the communities in which they are a member (including their home, school, neighborhood, country and greater world).

C7.1. Understand and Appreciate Civil Rights

Students understand and appreciate the rights embodied in the concepts of freedom and liberty embodied in the Constitution and Bill of Rights including:

1. Freedom of speech and religion;
2. The right to vote and run for elected office; and
3. The right to be treated fairly under the law.

C7.2. Understand and Fulfill Civil Responsibilities

Students understand and strive to fulfill the responsibilities of citizenship including a duty to abide by the law and respect the rights of others, participate in the democratic process, protect the environment, and volunteer to improve their school and community. They also understand additional responsibilities of adult citizenship including paying taxes and serving on juries.

C7.3 Respect Authority and Obey Laws

Students demonstrate good citizenship by contributing to the orderliness and fairness of society by respecting authority, obeying rules and laws (unless a higher moral duty justifies civil disobedience) and taking action (including reporting) to protect fellow citizens from dangerous or harmful conduct.

1. Students understand the special role that civil disobedience plays in the democratic process and the extraordinary conditions that must exist to justify unlawful conduct; and
2. Students set an example of rule following for their peers even when it is inconvenient (e.g., returning their shopping carts, abiding by the 10 item or less rule in markets).

C7.4. Participation in the Democratic Process

Students demonstrate good citizenship by staying informed about matters important in their school and community so they can formulate thoughtful positions, passionately advocate for their beliefs, engage in respectful and informed discussions, vote intelligently, and, if they choose, seek elected or appointed leadership positions.

1. Students exercise their civil rights fairly and responsibly. They examine and evaluate political claims and allegations to determine for themselves what is true and they maintain an open mind so they can objectively assess the political positions of others; and
2. Students maintain an open mind (i.e., a willingness to be persuaded) and demonstrate a willingness to re-examine their own positions and objectively consider the arguments and beliefs of others.

C7.5. Positive learning opportunity

Students are provided with positive and productive learning environments which are key to students' academic, emotional and social success in school. A climate of safety is created, where risk taking is encouraged, open conversation is promoted, trust and respect are fostered, and positive interaction and discovery is the norm.

C7.6. Safeguard the Environment

Students demonstrate good citizenship by proactively engaging in conduct that conserves natural resources (e.g., recycle and re-use, using water and fuel conservatively) and protects the natural environment from unnecessary destruction and all forms of pollution.

SCHOOL CLIMATE DOMAIN

This domain is concerned with the quality and character of a learning environment reflecting the norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, engagement, leadership practices, and organizational structures that encompass school life.

SC1. POSITIVE CULTURE

School leaders work to shape and influence every aspect of how a school functions, promoting comprehensive and evidence-based instructional and school-wide improvement efforts, designed to support students, staff and community members feeling welcomed, supported and safe in school.

SC1.1. Welcoming and accessible

Parents, students and staff feel valued and connected with an open line of communication to an accessible school leader. Interactions that occur within the school environment are positive, caring, and respectful.

SC1.2. Respectful and supportive relationships

Relationships among and between staff, families and students are mutually respectful, supportive, ethical and civil. Every student is connected to a caring and responsible adult in the school.

SC1.3. High expectations and standards (culture of excellence)

The school ethos is built around high expectations and commitment to excellence with an expectation that every student will learn and achieve positive outcomes.

SC1.4. Growth mindset

Educators will approach learning with a growth mindset, believing that with diligent effort students can:

1. Increase their basic intellectual abilities including the learning and thinking skills enabling them to master new and difficult concepts; and
2. Develop life skills, personal attributes, and moral virtues that enhance success in all aspects of their lives.

SC1.5. Participatory decision-making

The school leader is committed to work together with school staff, parents and students to discuss matters of mutual concern, and make decisions regarding a plan for school improvement.

SC1.6. High staff morale

Teachers feel they can take responsibility to make improvements in the teaching and learning environment that will motivate them to be a positive model for students while leading to their own professional and personal satisfaction.

SC2. ENGAGEMENT

All stakeholders, including administrators, staff, students, families and community members, play a role in the learning process to ensure mastery of academic content and the desired skills that encourage students to make effective and ethical decisions.

SC2.1. Parent involvement

Parents at all grade levels attend events, respond to communications and volunteer to play some constructive role with the school. Information about the mission and methods of the school is shared, as well as student progress, to ensure parents and families are viewed as integral members of the school community and partners in student learning.

SC2.2. Student engagement

A high percentage of students are engaged in their own education by promoting commitment and involvement of students in:

1. Intellectual engagement;
2. Social and emotional engagement;
3. Behavioral engagement; and
4. Physical engagement.

SC2.3. Staff consensus and commitment

Staff members understand, accept and seek to advance the mission and vision of the school by putting into practice the stated values through program initiatives and implementation strategies. Even if they don't fully agree, they accept their responsibility to fulfill their assigned role and do not undermine constructive attempts to achieve institutional objectives.

SC2.4. Administrator presence and participation

Administrators are visible and participate actively in school and parent events, participating in classroom learning opportunities and in a supportive role in evaluating staff. Data is regularly reviewed, concerns discussed and decisions are made in a collaborative manner that positively impact the school.

SC2.4. Administrator presence and participation

All staff members are provided opportunities to plan and participate in quality and continuous professional development in order to develop and sustain effective practices related to academic, social and emotional and character development.

SC3. QUALITY INSTRUCTION

A variety of student-centered learning activities exist where students can think critically, solve problems, work in cooperative groups, and become actively involved in the learning process. The school leader realizes that the greatest positive impact on student outcomes is quality instruction delivered by highly effective teachers leveraging technologies, communication skills, collaboration, and research to positively impact student outcomes.

SC3.1. Effective instructional strategies

Instructional and engaging practices address cognitive and behavioral learning as well as social, emotional, ethical and civic engagement to improve the school's ability to meet the needs of all students.

SC3.2. Collaborative teachers

Teachers and support staff are part of a professional learning community discussing curriculum, instructional techniques, best practices, student progress and school climate.

SC3.3. Proactive interaction with parents

Teachers are responsive and helpful to parents who seek information or guidance. They proactively seek to engage families in the academic and behavioral aspects of their children's school experience. School staff and administrators actively cultivate trusting, respectful relationships, creating the belief that the school is warm, inviting, and helpful.

SC3.4. Useful and productive student assessments

Teachers regularly provide constructive feedback of student work, allowing them to persist until they achieve competency. Teachers provide assessments of progress, including evaluation of strengths and areas that need improvement to students and parents.

SC3.5. Feedback and accountability

Teacher effectiveness is regularly assessed by administrators to ensure that detailed and constructive feedback is received that will lead to improvement in instructional practices. Accountability measures and data are used and monitored that directly demonstrate the impact of efforts to promote academic, social and emotional and character development.

SC4. INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The school has administrative leaders who are responsible for the development, operation and sustainability of high-quality practices that (a) enhance engagement in teaching, learning and school-wide activities; (b) address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage those who have become disengaged; and (c) develop and sustain an appropriate systemic infrastructure that inspires all staff to do their best work and be their best self.

SC4.1. Inspires commitment to vision

The school leader, with the input of teachers, staff and parents, formulates a vision for school improvement and inspires commitment to the vision by all constituencies.

SC4.2. Establishes a strategic plan

The leadership team formulates specific measurable objectives for each year that addresses academic growth and character development, with specific measurable strategies and a timeline to achieve those objectives.

SC4.3. Effective and efficient management

The school leader is an effective manager of the organizational structure, the instructional and support staff and allocated fiscal resources of the school.

SC4.4. Trust and confidence of constituents

There are high levels of trust and collaboration among teachers, support staff, and administrators to ensure there is a feeling of appreciation and a demonstration of pride in the school.

SC4.5. Regular communication

Leadership systematically and effectively communicates with teachers, staff, parents and students regarding matters that concern them and is accessible for response and feedback. This includes securing accurate and reliable data about school climate from students, school personnel and parents for continuous improvement with a process to share these results with the school community.

SC5. SAFETY AND POSITIVE BEHAVIORS

There are clear behavioral expectations for all areas of the school, which are taught, enforced, advocated and modeled by all staff members. Policies and procedures emphasize proactive, instructive, and restorative approaches to student behavior to ensure a safe place to learn.

SC5.1. Disciplinary rules, policies and strategies

The school has clear strategies to promote appropriate behavior, including agreed responses and consequences for inappropriate student behavior with sufficient support provided to implement these policies. These shared values and expectations create a framework for positive behavior throughout the school with all staff correcting misbehavior in ways that reinforce established expectations and cause minimal disruption to learning.

SC5.2. Security regarding outside threats

Students and staff feel physically, socially, intellectually, and emotionally safe throughout the school with clearly established procedures for reporting and responding to safety concerns. The school maintains visible and competent security personnel and/or other measures to protect against outside intrusion or threats.

SC5.3. Emergency preparedness

The school has a current plan and the necessary trained resources to deal with emergencies.

SC5.4. Detect and deal with weapons, drugs and alcohol

The school has effective surveillance and other methods of detecting weapons and drug or alcohol use, and clear policies for dealing with violations of school policies in these areas.

SC5.5. Prevention of dangerous physical conditions

The school implements a regular safety check system of all school facilities to detect and repair any dangerous conditions.

SC6. POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The school works to create an attractive and stimulating physical environment that supports and encourages learning. The school campus is welcoming, well-maintained, and representative of the diversity of the student population.

SC6.1. Attractiveness and maintenance of physical plant

The school demonstrates pride and responsibility in the physical appearance of all school facilities and sees that areas are clean and regularly maintained.

SC6.2. Instructional areas conducive to learning

Classrooms and other learning venues are designed and maintained to provide a clean and pleasant learning environment. School-wide expectations for academic, personal success and character growth and development are clearly displayed throughout the building.

SC6.3. Adequate physical space in classrooms

Instructional spaces and other programmatic facilities are sufficient to allow students and teachers to safely and comfortably engage in educational and co-curricular activities.

SC6.4. Adequate resources for instruction and co-curricular activities

School has adequate learning and co-curricular activity resources to achieve educational objectives.

SC6.5. Assessment of the learning environment

Students, their families, school staff and community stakeholders are regularly surveyed and are asked to indicate what the school should do to further enhance a welcoming, positive, supportive and safe learning environment. The data is used to improve relevant policies, practices and school facilities.

ABOUT CHARACTER COUNTS!

Built on the foundation of the Six Pillars of Character (trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship), CHARACTER COUNTS! provides practical strategies, curricular resources, and trainings to positively impact your school system, community, youth-serving or people-helping organization.

Since 1992, CHARACTER COUNTS has impacted more than 8-million youth. CHARACTER COUNTS! has demonstrated success as a stand-alone initiative or working in alignment with other programs such as PBIS to foster positive climate change to produce exceptional results in the academic, social and emotional, character development and school-climate domains.

CHARACTER COUNTS! is housed at The Robert D. and Billie Ray Center at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. As a global initiative that transforms lives and strengthens communities, CHARACTER COUNTS! supports our mission to improve civility through character development and ethical leadership.



The Robert D. and
Billie Ray Center

CHARACTER COUNTS!
2507 University Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50311
Phone: 515-271-1910
Email: raycenter@drake.edu
www.drake.edu/raycenter www.charactercounts.org

The CHARACTER COUNTS! Model Standards were created by Michael Josephson, founder of CHARACTER COUNTS!

CHARACTER COUNTS! and the Six Pillars of Character are trademarks of the Josephson Institute.