MODEL STANDARDS FOR EDUCATORS:

ACADEMIC, SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, CHARACTER AND SCHOOL CULTURE DEVELOPMENT

3RD EDITION- 2024

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This document is the result of an ongoing project of the nonprofit, nonpartisan Josephson Institute of Ethics to provide educators with a comprehensive, fully integrated statement of what educators can and should do to create a positive school culture and prepare students to:

1. succeed in school (including post-secondary education),
2. succeed in the workplace,
3. become engaged, ethical, and productive citizens, and
4. live happy, worthy, and fulfilling personal lives.[1]

TYPES OF OUTCOMES

These Model Standards specify four types of educational outcomes:

1. **Knowledge** - what students should know and understand. This includes information, concepts, theories, strategies, and frameworks, including critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making.

2. **Beliefs, Values, and Mindsets** - what students should think. This includes all beliefs that affect conduct and mental states, values, mindsets, and attitudes.
   - Beliefs are thoughts students hold to be true about what works (e.g., hard work, goal setting, and self-discipline), what is right (e.g., treating others the way you want to be treated), and what is personally desirable (e.g., money and independence). Beliefs influence how one perceives and reacts to opportunities and adversities. As young people mature, they continuously adopt, modify, and reject beliefs that drive their conduct and define their self-image. Success in school, work, and relationships, as well as the formation of good character, is significantly influenced by the beliefs they hold dear. Beliefs act as a compass, guiding actions, decisions, and interactions with the world. An important aspect of this framework concerns the responsibility of educators to nurture positive beliefs and mitigate the impact of negative ones. Specific guidance on instilling and advocating important beliefs is provided in this introduction.

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1   These model standards draw heavily upon the hands-on current research and reports regarding the whole child, school climate and culture, connectedness, behavior modification, the growth mindset, executive function, and research-based instructional strategies as well as the hands-on experience of thousands of educators involved in the Josephson Institute's CHARACTER COUNTS!® 7.0 student development programs (this version supplements the Institute's character education focus with expansive academic social-emotional, and school culture outcomes). These 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 as 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.org, the Excellence with Integrity Institute, the Center for the 4th and 5th Rs, and the National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention.

- <u>Values</u> are deeply ingrained beliefs that students consider so important that they drive priorities and decisions; they are attributes of character.

- <u>Mindsets</u> refer to a set of attitudes or fixed ideas that fundamentally influence one's outlook and expectations, and their willingness to try new things, persist in the face of obstacles, and derive satisfaction from their efforts (e.g., self-confidence/self-doubt, positivity/negativity, and gratitude/entitlement).

3. **Skills** - what students can do. Skills are abilities that enable students to perform specific tasks effectively. These are practical competencies that contribute to academic achievement, intellectual growth, positive relationships, and mental health (e.g., communication - the ability to express thoughts and ideas and interpret nonverbal cues; self-management - the capacity to be aware of, control, and express emotions).

4. **Traits** - traits are core habits of thought, feeling, and behavior that form the bedrock of personality and character and reflect a person's underlying values and principles. These standards delineate both performance character traits (attributes that contribute to effectiveness) and moral character traits (aspects of character that reflect ethical values that shape one's sense of right and wrong and determine how one treats others).

FOUR DOMAINS

Like its predecessors, this 3rd edition recognizes that academic excellence, social-emotional competence, moral character, and a positive school culture are inextricably linked and contribute to the holistic development of students.

1. **Academic Domain** - outcomes concerned with intellectual attributes designed to produce cognitive competencies, skills, and traits, including critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making.

2. **Social-Emotional Domain** - outcomes concerning attributes that equip students to become well-adjusted, empathetic individuals with the tools to navigate life's challenges, build positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. This domain includes self-awareness, self-management skills (including self-discipline, resilience, discernment, adaptability, patience, and perseverance), positive mindsets (including self-confidence, positivity, and gratitude), social awareness, relationship skills (including communication, collaboration, conflict management, and self-reliance), and ethical decision-making.

3. **Character Domain**- concerning the cultivation of a strong moral compass and promotion of universal core ethical values and character traits necessary to produce good moral character.

4. **Culture Domain** - focusing on conditions educators must create to establish a safe, positive, inclusive school culture conducive to learning and promotes respect, equity, and a sense of belonging.

PROGRESSIVE LEVELS OF LEARNING

Generally, educational standards are categorized by grade or developmental level. While the Josephson Institute acknowledges the developmental nature of cognitive skills and recognizes that some outcomes require more advanced intellectual and social-emotional development, we have not organized the standards by grade or developmental level. Instead, we expect educators to tailor expected outcomes to each student's developmental stage and individual capacities. On the other hand, the implementation guidelines supplement to the standards reflects developmentally appropriate strategies.

The standards in the Academic, Social-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
A2.3. Key and Lock Beliefs

A3. Responsible, Engaged, Autonomous, and Connected Learners
A3.1. Dedication to Education
A3.2. Engagement
A3.3(S). Self-Directed Learners
A3.4(S). Resourceful and Discerning Researchers
A3.5(S). Versatile Learners
A3.6. Connectedness

A4. Knowledgeable, Logical, Critical and Creative Thinkers
A4.1. Ability to Acquire and Retain Knowledge
A4.2. Ability to Understand Knowledge
A4.3. Ability to Apply Knowledge
A4.4. Ability to Analyze and Evaluate
A4.5(S). Create and Innovate
A4.6. Concentration
A4.7.(S) Perceptiveness
A4.8.(S) Open-Mindedness
A4.9.(S) Intellectual Integrity
A4.10.(S) Intellectual Independence
A4.11.(S) Intellectual Humility
A4.12.(S) Pursuit of Wisdom
A4.13. Executive Functions

A5. Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision-Making
A5.1. Critical Thinking
A5.2. Problem Solving and Decision-Making: Best Possible Result Framework
A5.3. Technological Literacy

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DOMAIN

SE1. Self-Awareness
SE1.1. Traits and Attributes
SE1.2. Emotions
SE1.3. Values and Beliefs
SE1.4.(S) Self-Acceptance
SE1.5.(S) Capacity to Be a Change Agent

SE2. Self-Management
SE2.1. Self-Control
SE2.2. Self-Discipline
SE2.3.(S) Resilience
SE2.4. Adaptability
SE2.5. Patience
SE2.6. Self-Improvement
SE2.7. Goal Setting and Planning
SE2.8. Time Management
SE2.9. Diligence
SE2.10. Perseverance and Grit
SE2.11. Demonstrate Self-Confidence
SE2.12. Adopt a Proactive Mindset
SE2.13. Demonstrate Positivity
SE2.14. Demonstrate Gratitude

SE3. Social Awareness
SE3.1. Understand Others
SE3.2. Experience and Demonstrate Empathy

SE4. Relationship Skills
SE4.1. Establish Positive Relationships
SE4.2. Communicate Effectively
SE4.3. Demonstrate Leadership
SE4.4. Collaborate
SE4.5. Manage Conflicts
SE4.6. Negotiation

SE5. Responsible Decision-Making
SE5.1. Rational and Reflective
SE5.2. Ethical and Responsible
SE5.3. Accountability
SE5.4. Healthy Choices
SE5.5. Self-Reliance and Prudent Money Management

CHARACTER DOMAIN

C1. The Ethical Foundation of Moral Character
C1.1. Universal Ethical Values
C1.2. Responsibility for Their Character
C1.3. Knowledge of 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, and Dependability
C2.6. Loyalty

C3. Respect
C3.1. Treating Others with Respect
C3.2. The Golden Rule
C3.3. The Basic Dos and Don'ts of Respect
C3.4. Respectful and Kind School Climate
C3.5.(S) Respecting Privacy
C3.6.(S) Respecting the Autonomy of Others

C4. Responsibility
C4.1. Compliance: Doing What Is Required
C4.2. Ethics: Doing What Should Be Done
C4.3. Consequences of Words
C4.4. Consequences of 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

C5. Fairness
C5.1. Basic Dos and Don'ts of Fairness
C5.2. Making Fair Decisions
C5.3.(S) Proportionality
C5.4.(S) Complexity of Fairness

C6. Caring
C6.1. Basic Dos and Don'ts of Caring
C6.2.(S) Caring Moderates Other Ethical Duties

C7. Good Citizenship
C7.1. Understand and Appreciate Civil Rights
C7.2. Understand and Fulfill Civic Responsibilities
C7.3 Respect Authority and Obey Laws
C7.4.(S) Participate in the Democratic Process
C7.5.(S) Improve Their School's Climate
C7.6. Safeguard the Environment

SCHOOL CULTURE DOMAIN

SC1 Supportive and Respectful
SC1.1. Welcoming and Accessible
SC1.2. Respectful and Supportive Relationships
SC1.3. High Expectations and Standards
SC1.4. Growth Mindset
SC1.5. Participatory Decision-Making
SC1.6.High Staff Morale

SC2 Dedicated to Stakeholders
SC2.1. Parent Involvement
SC2.2. Student Engagement
SC2.3. Staff Consensus and Commitment
SC2.4. Administrator Presence and Participation
SC2.5. Professional Development Opportunities

SC3.Committed to Excellence
SC3.1. Effective Instructional Strategies
SC3.2. Collaborative Teachers
SC3.3. Proactive Interaction with Parents
SC3.4. Useful and Productive Student Assessments
SC3.5 Feedback and Accountability

SC4. Inspirational School Community
SC4.1. Inspires Commitment to Vision
SC4.2. Establishes a Strategic Plan
SC4.3. Effective and Efficient Management
SC4.4. Trust and Confidence of Constituents
SC4.5. Regular Communication

SC5. Safe and Positive Behaviors
SC5.1. Disciplinary Rules, Policies, and Strategies
SC5.2. Security Regarding Outside Threats
SC5.3. Emergency Preparedness
SC5.4. Detect and Deal with Weapons, Drugs, and Alcohol
SC5.5. Prevention of Dangerous Physical Conditions

SC6.Encouraging Environment
SC6.1. Attractiveness and Maintenance of Physical Plant
SC6.2. Instructional Areas Conducive to Learning
SC6.3. Adequate Physical Space in Classrooms
SC6.4. Adequate Resources for Instruction and Co-Curricular Activities
SC6.5. Assessment of the Learning Environment

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ACADEMIC, SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, CHARACTER AND SCHOOL CULTURE DEVELOPMENT

ACADEMIC DOMAIN

The academic domain focuses on intellectual development and the educator's responsibility to cultivate cognitive skills,instill positive beliefs and mindsets about learning, promote behaviors that improve academic performance, and foster the development of character traits that contribute to successful learning. To accomplish these objectives, educators should achieve the following.

A1. MOTIVATED AND COMMITTED LEARNERS

Instill students with a deep appreciation of the value of education so that they become eager and committed learners who 1) love learning as a source of personal enjoyment and growth, 2) believe that education and learning will enrich their lives, 3) are motivated to do well in school and earn their diploma, 4) seek post-graduation educational opportunities, and 5) recognize that education is a key to increased job opportunities and earning potential.

A1.1. Curiosity

Foster and cultivate an environment where curiosity is encouraged and valued, enabling students to actively engage in inquiry-based learning and exploration by:

1. encouraging students to ask questions, conduct research, and explore topics of interest while creating a classroom culture where questions are a vital part of the learning process,
2. providing opportunities for hands-on activities and experiments that allow students to investigate and discover new concepts,
3. recognizing and supporting individual student interests, encouraging them to pursue personal inquiries and projects,
4. nurturing the trait of curiosity, fostering enjoyment in acquiring new knowledge and skills, and
5. instilling a desire to learn more about themselves, others, and the world around them so that students are motivated to ask questions and explore topics of personal interest.

A1.2. Personal Growth and Lifelong Learning

Instill a belief in the importance and value of continuous self-improvement, personal growth, and life-long learning so that students are committed to:

1. increasing their knowledge and understanding skills through reading and advanced education, and
2. seeking diverse learning experiences (e.g., classes, reading, cross-cultural conversations, or travel) to broaden their perspectives.

A2. CONFIDENT AND DILIGENT LEARNERS

Instill students with positive beliefs and mindsets so that students:

A2.1. Growth Mindset

Approach learning and other aspects of their lives with a growth mindset. They believe that with focused effort and diligent practice, they can increase their basic intellectual abilities that enable them to master new and difficult concepts and develop life skills, personal attributes, and moral virtues that enhance success in all aspects of their lives. (Instead of thinking, "I can't," they think, "I can't. . . yet.").

A2.2. Learning from Mistakes

Respond to mistakes and unsuccessful efforts with a positive perspective. They believe failures and disappointments are unavoidable and essential to growth and learning ("failing forward").

1. Believe that there are lessons to be learned from every experience and that this new knowledge will help them succeed in the future. (They ask themselves: "What can I learn from this?")
2. Believe that persistence, patience, and self-discipline are often necessary for learning.
3. Are willing to work hard and struggle to attain success.

A2.3. Key and Lock Beliefs

Understand the difference and impact of key and lock beliefs.

A2.3.1. Key Beliefs

Key beliefs are keys to positive outcomes. They are empowering convictions that promote success and personal growth (including a growth mindset) by enhancing positive attitudes, life skills, and traits, including resilience, perseverance, self-confidence, a sense of self-worth, commitment to ethical principles (e.g., "Education will improve my life." or "Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.").

A2.3.2. Lock Beliefs

Lock beliefs are limiting or harmful mindsets that impede personal growth, undermine moral values, promote disengagement, and contribute to negative behavior (e.g., "Education is a waste of time." or "Everyone lies, it is an acceptable life strategy." or "I am no good at math.")

A3. RESPONSIBLE, AUTONOMOUS, ENGAGED, AND CONNECTED LEARNERS

Inspire students to accept personal responsibility for their education so that they build connections with their teachers, classmates, and school and become self-directed learners fully engaged in all aspects of their education so that students:

A3.1. Dedication to Education

Take advantage of their educational opportunities and demonstrate determination to learn. Students:
1. believe it is their responsibility to learn and overcome challenges and other obstacles (e.g., teachers they do not connect with, courses they find difficult or uninteresting, or deficiencies in school resources), and
2. proactively supplement classroom instruction to fill gaps in understanding by asking questions, seeking help from teachers and peers, taking advantage of support, tutoring, or support services, and accessing online and library resources.

A3.2. Engagement

Demonstrate full engagement in their learning by:
1. coming to class prepared,
2. attending all classes,
3. being punctual,
4. being attentive,
5. participating in class,
6. taking good notes,
7. asking for help,
8. completing all assignments,
9. establishing a study routine, and
10. using a planner or calendar.

A3.3. Self-Directed Learners

Demonstrate responsibility for their learning by becoming autonomous and resourceful learners who start and complete their schoolwork without the need for direct supervision or external pressure.

A3.4. Resourceful and Discerning Researchers

Demonstrate the ability to conduct broad-based, independent, and discerning research (including the use of libraries and the Internet), provide the source material for major papers and projects, and answer questions that interest them.

A3.5. Versatile Learners

Identify their learning style preferences (e.g., lectures, experiential activities, reading, or interactive discussions) but accept responsibility for learning by all methods.

A3.6. Connectedness

1. Proactively seek to form positive relationships with teachers, counselors, support staff, and classmates.
2. Participate in school activities or clubs.
3. Believe they belong and that their teachers, counselors, and others in the school community care about them.

A4. KNOWLEDGEABLE, LOGICAL, CRITICAL, AND CREATIVE THINKERS

Educators should provide students with the knowledge, skills, beliefs, mindsets, and traits that help them develop progressively complex intellectual abilities, including these higher-order thinking skills.

A4.1. Ability to Acquire and Retain Knowledge

Recall and retain progressively complex forms of information, enabling them to:
1. recite facts, formulas, vocabulary, and important historical details with accuracy,
2. develop and use a substantial vocabulary,
3. state definitions of terms, the content of theories, and the wording of key principles, and
4. recount historical periods, plot points from literary works, or steps in a scientific experiment.

A4.2. Ability to Understand Knowledge

Comprehend the meaning and significance of facts, assertions, ideas, concepts, and theories.
1. Restate, paraphrase, explain, and summarize facts, definitions, methods, rules, theories, and concepts, including the ability to prepare and deliver explanatory and persuasive arguments and presentations,
2. Explain the meaning and the implications of information conveyed in expository materials (e.g., textbooks, diagrams, and graphs) and purely functional documents (e.g., bus schedules, instruction manuals, schematics, and blueprints),
3. Interpret the literal and symbolic meaning of literary writings (e.g., novels, poems, and plays), and
4. Illustrate or simplify information with pictures, diagrams, charts, and graphs.

A4.3. Ability to Apply Knowledge

Use existing knowledge and skills in new and concrete situations. Examples:
1. Use a currency conversion formula to determine the price of an object.
2. Apply mathematical concepts to solve real-world problems.
3. Use scientific principles to design and conduct experiments.
4. Apply ethical principles to make moral or ethical decisions.
5. Utilize logical reasoning to make strategic decisions.
6. Transfer knowledge and skills they learned in one subject area to solve problems or address challenges in other disciplines.

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

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

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

Build 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. Create original ideas and solutions, including a capacity to "think outside the box" to devise fresh and unique ideas to solve problems and to create something new or unusual by:
   - re-classifying, re-categorizing, re-organizing, and rearranging information,
   - assembling, combining, integrating, and reconciling divergent theories and approaches, and
   - supplementing existing theories and explanations with new perspectives or approaches.
2. Apply creative approaches and solutions to real situations in a practical manner.
3. Use their imaginations and employ various creative thinking techniques (e.g., brainstorming or mind-mapping) to generate ideas and innovations to improve current practices or develop wholly new approaches.
4. Continually improve their creations by reflecting on and evaluating the effectiveness of their decisions and the quality of their work. They demonstrate a willingness to make changes to achieve better results.

SKILLS THAT ENHANCE LEARNING
Educators should foster the following skills in students.

A4.6. Concentration

The ability and disposition to concentrate (i.e., focused and undivided attention) in class and while studying. They believe that this skill will substantially enhance their academic success and communication skills.

A4.8. Open-Mindedness

Demonstrate the trait of open-mindedness, demonstrated by the ability and disposition to seek out and consider divergent and opposing viewpoints. They can challenge and test their assumptions, beliefs, and conclusions.

A4.10. Intellectual Independence

Demonstrate intellectual independence by having the confidence to think for themselves, forming beliefs and opinions based on facts and logic, and recognizing and rejecting social pressure. Instead of adopting the beliefs, thoughts, and values of peers or other external sources, they rely on their own reasoning and judgment.

A4.7. Perceptiveness

The ability to notice and understand subtle details and underlying meanings quickly and accurately, characterized by keen observation, insightful understanding, sharp awareness, and mental acuity. They note anomalies and inconsistencies, ask questions to resolve doubts, and discover connections and patterns in seemingly unrelated events.

A4.9. Intellectual Integrity

An unwavering commitment to intellectual honesty, open-mindedness, and the rigorous pursuit of truth. Students draw and express conclusions based on an objective evaluation of evidence, consciously setting aside preconceived notions and biases. They seek out and objectively evaluate differing points of view, new evidence, and arguments. Students willingly admit their errors and change their beliefs and stated positions when confronted with persuasive, credible evidence. They never assert positions they do not sincerely believe.

A4.11. Intellectual Humility

The trait of intellectual humility is demonstrated by the ability to recognize and acknowledge the limits of their knowledge.
1. Understand that there are often multiple valid perspectives and solutions to complex problems and that their current conclusions on what is true may not, in fact, be so.
2. Actively seek out new information and diverse viewpoints and demonstrate a willingness to revise their beliefs in light of new evidence,.
3. Avoid rigidly clinging to their own opinions and are open to the possibility of being wrong.
4. Engage in respectful dialogue with others, value the opportunity to learn from different perspectives, and recognize that knowledge is an ongoing process of discovery and refinement.

A4.12. Pursuit of Wisdom

Understand and pursue wisdom, an advanced mental competence that combines intelligence, experience, and common sense, to develop their ability to make wise judgments that reflect a deep understanding of facts, opinions, theories, and human nature.

A4.13. Executive Functions

The ability to:
1. organize their school and other commitments,
2. manage their time and make schedules,
3. take and organize useful notes,
4. efficiently study for exams and optimize learning,
5. focus on the task of learning by concentrating and maintaining focused attention and avoiding distractions in class and while studying, and
6. ethically and effectively use current and emerging technologies to support research and communication and enhance their learning across disciplines.

A5. CRITICAL THINKING, PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION-MAKING

Educators should teach students the skill of critical thinking and the ability to solve problems and make ethical, effective, and responsible decisions.

A5.1. Critical Thinking

Understand and pursue wisdom, an advanced mental competence that combines intelligence, experience, and common sense, to develop their ability to make wise judgments that reflect a deep understanding of facts, opinions, theories, and human nature.

A5.1.1. Skepticism and Discernment

Develop the skill of discernment and recognize the importance of resisting conclusions without thoroughly analyzing, evaluating, and interpreting opinions and assertions of fact. Objectively and logically assess information and claims through the following.[2]
1. **Evaluating Credibility:** Assess the credibility of claims by examining supporting evidence, the expertise and historical reliability of the source, and the potential for political bias or motives to deceive or distort information.
2. **Detecting Misinformation:** Recognize the prevalence of false and misleading information in digital environments and be vigilant to detect common tactics used to spread misinformation (e.g., fake, false, and misleading text, images, audio, and video produced by artificial intelligence technologies), particularly regarding scientific, historical, and political claims influenced by partisan agendas.
3. **Applying Skepticism**: Approach implausible, unlikely, or "too good to be true" claims with common sense and skepticism, especially those that contradict or seek to debunk generally accepted scientific or historical propositions

A5.1.2. Assumptions

Identify personal assumptions and biases that may subconsciously shape their perspective.

A5.1.3. Credibility of Source

Assess the credibility of information from various sources, analyzing expertise, bias, motive, and the quality of supporting evidence.

A5.1.4. Fact-Checking

Employ effective fact-checking methods and utilize reliable resources to validate or challenge information.

A5.1.5. Facts or Opinions

Differentiate between anecdotal and scientific evidence and statements based on personal opinions.

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2   Educators should develop these skills in the context of discussion of current controversies.

A5.1.6. Diverse Viewpoints

Consider diverse viewpoints, including those they may disagree with, to fully understand complex issues.

A5.1.7. Logic

Recognize logical fallacies and understand how these reasoning errors can be used to mislead or manipulate opinions.

A5.1.8. Statistics

Recognize the potential for misleading statistical claims and examine their validity by evaluating the methodology, currency, sample size, cherry-picked data (statistics that selectively highlight supporting data while ignoring contradictory information), differences between averages and medians, and the distinction between correlation and causation.

A5.1.9. Marketing and Political Claims

Evaluate marketing and political claims with skepticism, recognizing the strong motive to cause them to believe something that is advantageous to the source of the claim (e.g., diet ads, exaggerated claims of achievement, or negative information about an opponent).

A5.2. Problem Solving and Decision-Making: Best Possible Result Framework

Educators should develop students' ability to apply this eight-step problem solving/decision-making framework to produce the best possible result (BPR).

1. **Stop and Think.** All good decisions start with a stop. The more important a decision is (in terms of severity and longevity of the potential consequences), the more important it is to avoid impulsive choices driven by emotions or inadequate information. (Consider how often valid criticism of a decision evokes the question, "What were you thinking?" Students should be able to give a rational response.)
2. **Identify the Best Possible Result (BPR).** Determine the outcome they want to achieve by determining the boundaries of the problem to be addressed. For example, a student activist is upset by recent school shootings. They may narrowly define the problem as access to guns. Or, they may view the problem more broadly, like school safety. A narrow goal focuses on narrow solutions. If the problem is defined broadly, many more solutions are relevant. Once they have defined the problem, they should articulate a clear statement of the desired outcome (Best Possible Result). The Best Possible Result is legal, ethical, effective, and efficient (i.e., accomplishes desired results utilizing the least amount of time and resources without causing negative, unintended consequences).
3. **Assess Information.** Determine what is known for sure, what claims need to be verified, and what additional information is necessary or would help. They evaluate the completeness and reliability of the information, considering its form (i.e., is it direct observation of facts or hearsay; facts or opinions).
4. **Brainstorm Options.** Develop a list of all options (i.e., alternative actions) likely to accomplish the Best Possible Result, recognizing there is rarely a single "right" answer and optimal solutions may be viewed differently by various stakeholders. Be creative and think "outside the box." Where time permits, remember, "Two heads are always better than one." Seek input from others, including a trusted adult.
5. **Identify Stakeholders.** Identify who will be affected by the decision (i.e., stakeholders) and demonstrate empathy and perspective-taking to analyze how actions would impact and be interpreted by people of different backgrounds or positions that would be affected by the problem and solution options.
6. **Filter Out Bad Options.** Eliminate options that are unethical, illegal, not feasible, or are likely to cause significant negative unintended consequences.
7. **Choose and Implement.** Make a timely decision and implement it.
8. **Monitor and Modify.** Monitor whether the action is or has achieved the Best Possible Result and make whatever adjustments are necessary (including abandoning an original plan and starting again with new facts).

A5.3. Technological Literacy

Educators should ensure that students demonstrate competence in selecting, learning, and using various current and emerging technologies safely and ethically. They use these technologies to communicate socially and professionally, conduct research, acquire diverse perspectives, and gain new knowledge and skills that enhance their analytical and critical thinking abilities. Additionally, students are aware of the ethical considerations and potential misuse of AI, ensuring they use these technologies responsibly and thoughtfully, considering their impact on society.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DOMAIN

This domain focuses on social and emotional qualities that enhance mental and emotional well-being and boost academic outcomes and school safety.

SE1. SELF-AWARENESS

Educators should cultivate self-awareness in students, empowering them to identify their emotions, core values, mindsets, and traits and understand how they impact their feelings, behavior, and interactions.

SE1.1. Traits and Attributes

Identify the traits and attributes that define their core personality and character and accurately assess their physical, mental, emotional, and moral attributes and how each attribute contributes to or undermines success.

SE1.3. Values and Beliefs

Identify and understand their core values (i.e., what is really important to them), beliefs, and opinions that influence students' feelings and actions.

SE1.2. Emotions

1. Engage in introspection to identify the feelings, attitudes, assumptions, preconceptions, and motivations behind their actions and understand how they impact the way students interpret and respond to communications and events.
2. Identify triggers for negative emotional responses.
3. Recognize and guard against exaggerating the severity and duration of negative feelings caused by mistakes, embarrassing moments, failures, rejections, and other adverse events.
4. Seek assistance from trusted adults or professionals for severe mental health issues.

SE1.4. Self-Acceptance

1. Develop self-acceptance and a positive self-image and sense of self-worth, independent of external validation or comparison with others, so that they are sufficiently comfortable "being themselves" and able to resist peer or other external pressures.
2. Develop self-esteem by appreciating their strengths, talents, and positive qualities.
3. Avoid judging themselves by unreasonable standards of perfectionism.
4. Build resilience against hurtful comments or judgments by prioritizing their sense of self-worth over external opinions.

SE1.5. Capacity to Be a Change Agent

Recognize their capacity to be a positive change agent in their families, school, community, and the world.

SE2. SELF-MANAGEMENT

Educators should destigmatize anxiety, depression, and trauma, provide students with techniques to deal with trauma or severe mental distress, and help them develop mindsets, skills, and traits that empower students achieve the following.

SE2.1. Self-Control

Manage negative emotions, thoughts, feelings, and impulses that impair judgment or lead to detrimental behavior.

SE2.1.1. Disruptive Conduct

Express their thoughts and feelings at appropriate times and in appropriate ways (not disrupting class or creating other undesirable outcomes).

SE2.1.2. Strategies

Learn and use strategies to help them:
1. manage or eradicate durable negative thoughts and feelings (e.g., persistent negative thinking, distress, anxiety, and depression), and
2. eliminate resentment, regret, and grudges that diminish their ability to enjoy their lives.

SE2.3. Resilience

Strengthen their resiliency and post-trauma growth.

SE2.3.2. Confidence

Face adversity with confidence that they can endure, recover, and become stronger as a result (post-trauma growth).

SE2.3.4. Persevere Through Challenges with a Conviction to Not Give Up

SE2.3.5. Focus on the Future and Move on Rather than Dwelling on the Traumatic Events

SE2.4. Adaptability

Demonstrate adaptability by adjusting to unexpected and undesirable changes (e.g., a new teacher in the middle of the semester, a death or divorce in the family) positively, making the best of new situations.

SE2.6. Self-Improvement

Demonstrate commitment to continuous self-improvement by:
1. seeking and constructively receiving positive and negative feedback, and
2. altering attitudes and behavior in response to valid criticism.

SE2.2. Self-Discipline

Develop and employ the willpower to avoid procrastination and excuses. They meet their responsibilities and pursue their goals despite distractions, temptations, difficulties, discomfort, and boredom.

SE2.3.1. Critical Thinking

Apply critical thinking and problem-solving skills to challenge underlying fears and assumptions and provide rational strategies to help them overcome the negative impact of traumatic events.

SE2.3.3. Acceptance

Understand that misfortunes and personal tragedies are an unavoidable part of life and are not a form of punishment for something they did.

SE2.3.6. Maintain a Sense of Hope and Optimism, Even in Difficult Times

SE2.5. Patience

Demonstrate patience by maintaining composure when faced with frustrating circumstances.

SE2.7. Goal Setting and Planning

Set goals, make plans, and follow through with them.

SE2.8. Time Management

Employ time management and organization skills that support the achievement of goals (e.g., setting aside time each day to study or saving money towards a long-term goal).

SE2.9. Diligence

Demonstrate the mindset and character trait of diligence by:
1. treating responsibilities as serious obligations,
2. following through on commitments,
3. working hard, and
4. always pursuing excellence.

SE2.10. Perseverance and Grit

Develop and demonstrate perseverance, persistence, tenacity, and grit, empowering them to pursue and achieve goals despite mistakes, setbacks, and other obstacles that make the task difficult or seem impossible by fostering the following qualities.

1. **Focus.** When confronted with difficulties and setbacks, students focus on why they set the goal and the benefits they will derive when it is achieved.
2. **Don't quit.** Students don't allow obstacles, difficulties, discomfort, impatience, or fatigue to cause them to give up pursuing important long-term goals.
3. **Be patient.** Things often take longer than expected; students continue to work hard even when progress is slow.
4. **Be positive.** Students maintain a positive attitude, even when the achievement of an important long-term goal is harder than expected or seems unlikely.
5. **Stick to it.** Students develop the habit of finishing tasks even if they require more effort and patience than students expected.
6. **Realistic expectations.** When setting important goals, students expect setbacks and unexpected difficulties as part of the process.

SE2.11. Demonstrate Self-Confidence

1. Demonstrate the mindset and character trait of self-confidence based on a realistic, favorable view of their abilities and potential.
2. Believe they can overcome obstacles to achieve their goals.
3. Try new things and step outside of their comfort zone.
4. Express their needs and opinions despite the possibility of criticism or rejection.

SE2.12. Adopt a Proactive Mindset

1. Approach challenges and problems with a proactive mindset displayed by a willingness to take control of their lives by initiating action without prompting or pressure from others.
2. Demonstrate initiative and self-motivation by doing what needs to be done before being asked or before the situation reaches a critical point.
3. Begin assigned tasks and work independently rather than waiting for instructions.
4. Anticipate future challenges or opportunities and act to address them.

SE2.13. Demonstrate Positivity

Demonstrate a positive mindset including optimism, enthusiasm, hopefulness, cheerfulness, and gratitude.

1. Believe that a positive mindset will improve their lives.
2. Approach problems with a solutions-oriented mindset, seeking solutions rather than dwelling on negativity.
3. Give people the benefit of the doubt and assume good intentions in ambiguous situations.
4. Acknowledge and celebrate personal achievements and the achievements of others.
5. Approach new experiences and opportunities with enthusiasm.
6. Interpret setbacks constructively, finding silver linings in negative experiences.
7. Concentrate on what they can influence rather than fixating on factors outside of their control.
8. Finding value and gratification in selfless service and making a positive difference in the lives of others.

SE2.14. Demonstrate Gratitude

Demonstrate the mindset and character trait of gratefulness so that they:

1. consistently identify and experience gratitude and acknowledge the good things in their lives (i.e., they count their blessings), and
2. express gratitude for gifts, favors, compliments, and services received.

SE3. SOCIAL AWARENESS

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Educators should foster social awareness skills, mindsets, and character traits to help students:

SE3.1. Understand Others

1. Develop and employ active listening and attentive observation to interpret what others are feeling and thinking.
2. Accurately assess how they are perceived by others (e.g., are they valued, trusted, respected, and liked).

SE3.2. Experience and Demonstrate Empathy

Demonstrate empathy, the disposition, and the ability to sympathetically understand and personally identify with the emotional states, needs, and feelings of others. Students with empathy demonstrate the following.

1. Identify and understand the feelings and needs of others and how they look at or experience a situation by being sensitive and attuned to perceive unexpressed emotions such as fear, sadness, and anger.
2. Understand perspective-taking or "standing in another's shoes",
3. Seek to console, comfort, calm, support, and encourage people suffering from grief, pain, and negative emotions (e.g., guilt or shame),
4. Accurately interpret the motives, intentions, and goals of others (e.g., when a hurtful comment was well-intended or when a person says they are okay and they are not), and
5. Understand how people's unique backgrounds, experiences, beliefs, values, ideologies, and traits influence the way they interpret and react to events and communications.

SE4. RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

Educators should foster relationship skills, mindsets, and character traits to empower students to:

SE4.1. Establish Positive Relationships

1. Establish positive personal relationships with family members, teachers, classmates, and others as a source of companionship, a sense of belonging, intellectual stimulation, and emotional support.
2. Preserve important relationships by demonstrating a willingness to compromise, apologize, acknowledge accountability, offer and accept forgiveness, express remorse, and take meaningful actions to make amends for their mistakes.
3. Enhance friendships by being unselfish, patient, understanding, accepting, and loyal.

SE4.2. Communicate Effectively

1. Express their thoughts and feelings clearly.
2. Correctly interpret ideas, opinions, claims, desires, and needs expressed verbally, and
3. Employ attentiveness and active listening to extract unstated messages about what another person is thinking or feeling from nonverbal communication (e.g., tone of voice, facial expressions, body language, silence, and other cues).

SE4.3. Demonstrate Leadership

Influence the beliefs and actions of others by:

1. building trust and credibility,
2. inspiring confidence and motivation through inspirational rhetoric, reasoned argument, appeals to emotion, and setting an example,
3. empowering others with guidance, timely praise, and constructive criticism,
4. demonstrating a willingness to accept responsibility and make sound and timely decisions,
5. organizing groups, building teams, and building consensus, and
6. effectively articulating the purpose, concerns, and ideas of a group.

SE4.4. Collaborate

Collaborate, cooperate, and work with others as a member of a team.

SE4.5. Manage Conflicts

Manage conflicts by employing strategies to anticipate, avoid, and de-escalate conflicts and formulate and implement peaceful resolution of disputes.

SE4.6. Negotiation

Develop negotiation skills in an age-appropriate manner, both through direct instruction and modeling.
1. Discern when negotiation is appropriate. Consider that some rules or expectations set by parents or teachers are not open for discussion, whether the other party has the authority or flexibility to accommodate the student's desired outcomes.
2. Recognize that there is often a power imbalance and that negotiation must be more in the form of a request than an exchange of concessions.
3. Employ basic negotiation techniques.
   - **Identify the Desired Outcome.** Identify and advocate a reasonable Best Possible Result (i.e., what you want even if it is more than you think you can get).
   - **Communicate Clearly and Respectfully.** Respectfully and clearly express desired outcomes.
   - **Practice Active Listening.** Demonstrate attentiveness to the other party's statements and seek clarification when needed; acknowledge that you have heard the other party by words or gestures (i.e., nodding).
   - **Consider the Concerns of Others.** Respectfully and empathetically consider the other party's needs, wants, and perspectives and respond to those concerns in a manner that treats them seriously.
   - **Understand and Accept Compromise.** Recognize the value and often the need to compromise (i.e., accept a result that is less than everything wanted).
   - **Uphold Moral Commitments.** Acknowledge the moral responsibility of both parties to honor the terms of the agreed-upon result.
   - **Clarify.** Ensure mutual understanding of the final agreement to prevent future misunderstandings or conflicts.

SE5. RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

Educators should instill students with 1) a commitment to make decisions that align with core ethical principles and students' values, 2) a desire to prioritize safety and well-being, and 3) the ability to consider short-term and long-term consequences for themselves and others affected by their choices.

SE5.1. Rational and Reflective

Apply critical thinking skills to ensure their decisions are thoughtful and based on logic and reasoning. Then, students can think ahead to anticipate the possible consequences of their choices.

SE5.2. Ethical and Responsible

Evaluate the ethical dimension of their choices and ensure that they honor core ethical principles.

SE5.4. Healthy Choices

Make healthy choices to protect their well-being by eating well and getting sufficient sleep and exercise. They refrain from self-harm, eating disorders, abuse of prescription drugs, alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, and other intoxicating or mind-altering substances.

SE5.3. Accountability

Accept responsibility (i.e., accountability) for the consequences of their words and actions, recognizing their obligation to avoid both intentional and unintentional (but foreseeable) harm to others.

SE5.5. Self-Reliance and Prudent Money Management

Demonstrate 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. Students demonstrate self-reliance through the following.
1. Manage their affairs so they can pay their own way and not be a burden on others.
2. Live within their means and avoid debt and other obligations that may be beyond their ability to satisfy.
3. Develop an understanding of basic financial literacy, including transactions and the complexities of managing their financial resources.
4. Understand the need to be prudent and well-informed when making significant financial decisions, especially if they involve borrowing money or living beyond their means.

The Moral Character Domain focuses on three interrelated attributes which define the ethical and moral dimensions of character: moral values, principles, and traits.

Moral values are the core beliefs about what is fundamentally right or wrong. Values become operational through principles and prescriptive statements that translate those beliefs into standards of conduct specifying how one should behave (e.g., the value of trustworthiness leads to specific behavioral principles: be honest and truthful, keep promises and commitments, demonstrate moral courage). When values and principles are deeply ingrained characteristics, they become traits, enduring patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving that are fundamental to a person's nature.

C1. THE ETHICAL FOUNDATION OF MORAL CHARACTER

These standards set out specific educational outcomes to guide educators' efforts to cultivate good moral character.

C1.1. Universal Ethical Values

Use the widely accepted framework of universal ethical values called The Six Pillars of Character:® trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. It provides a common ethical framework that underpins human interactions and the foundation of moral conduct. This list of values provides students with a common language within elementary, middle, and high schools that are critical to establishing an ethical, supportive school culture.

C1.2. Responsibility for Their Character

Believe that the formation of their character lies in their own hands and that they can improve their character by conscientious efforts to strengthen their commitment to ethical values.

C1.3. Knowledge of Ethical Concepts and Terms

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 the following.
1. There is a difference between universal ethical values and personal ethical values. Ethical values are beliefs about virtue and morality that are consistent across time and cultures. Personal ethical values are 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, or hunting).
2. Ethical duties (i.e., moral obligations) are different from, and are sometimes more demanding and important than, legal duties. For example, civil disobedience includes a deliberate and open violation of the law (such as defying laws requiring segregation based on race).
3. Ethics are different than values. Ethics refers to standards of conduct and how a person should behave. To behave ethically is to behave in a manner consistent with what is right or wrong. Values are a much larger concept embracing all forms of deeply held beliefs that determine what is right and wrong.

C2. TRUSTWORTHINESS

Educators should instill students with the belief that trust is essential to meaningful and lasting personal and professional relationships and fosters the development of the ethical values of integrity, honesty, promise-keeping, and loyalty, defining attributes of trustworthiness. Trustworthy students:

C2.1. Integrity

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

C2.2. Honest Communications

Recognize the central role honesty plays in generating trust, and demonstrate honesty in 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. 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).
3. **Candor.** Students know that certain relationships (e.g., parent-child, teacher-student, or 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 their mother's favorite vase must tell their mother voluntarily).

C2.3. Honest Actions

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

C2.4. Belief That Honesty Pays

Believe that honesty and integrity will help them succeed in school and life and strengthen relationships. 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, or it's only cheating if you get caught).

C2.5. Promise-Keeping, Reliability, and Dependability

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

Demonstrate trustworthiness by being loyal, standing up for, being there for, and being faithful to 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. RESPECT

Educators should instill students with the belief that the well-being and dignity of all people is important simply because they are fellow human beings. 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

Understand that they are not morally required to respect everyone in the sense of holding them in high esteem. They are required to treat everyone with respect regardless of their personal assessment of someone'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

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

C3.3. The Basic Dos and Don'ts of Respect

Demonstrate respect by:
1. being civil, courteous, and polite (i.e., use good manners),
2. refraining from offensive and disrespectful profanity, insults, and gestures,
3. listening respectfully to others even if we think what is 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

Demonstrate respect by seeking to create and support a kind, caring, emotionally and physically safe, and respectful school climate. 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., keep their hands to ourselves),
2. cruel, unkind, or deliberately hurtful or embarrassing gossip, and
3. physical or cyberbullying, harassment, and mean-spirited teasing or taunting.

C3.5. Respecting Privacy

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 backpack, hack their social media pages, or eavesdrop on their conversations).

C3.6. Respecting the Autonomy of Others

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. Demonstrate respect for the autonomy of others through the following.
1. Take the desires, opinions, perspectives, values, and goals of others seriously.
2. Refrain from repetitive arguments, tirades, rants, insults, ridicule, manipulation, or coercion trying to cause others to change their opinions or actions.
3. Provide 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 them again. The principle of autonomy says you should deliver the note).

C4. RESPONSIBILITY

Educators should teach students how to demonstrate the trait of responsibility. Students will take ownership of their lives and acknowledge their power to choose what they think (including their attitudes and mindsets), what they say and do, and who they are (their character). Responsible students are accountable for the consequences of their choices.

C4.1. Compliance: Doing What is Required

Accept the 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

Accept responsibility for 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 of Words

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

C4.4. Consequences of Actions

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

Acknowledge their responsibility to enhance their chances of success in school and life, the quality of their relationships, and their own well-being and happiness.
1. Students consciously choose positive attitudes and mindsets (including optimism, enthusiasm, gratitude, and cheerfulness) and reject self-defeating attitudes (e.g., pessimism, cynicism, defeatism, and hopelessness). See SE 2.6.
2. Students develop critical self-management, social, and success skills and traits (SE2, SE3, SE4), including self-discipline, resiliency, perseverance, stress management, organization, 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

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

C4.7. Learning from Experience

Accept their responsibility to review and learn from all experiences. They 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.

C5. FAIRNESS

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Educators should teach students to strive to be fair and just in all their actions.

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

Do:
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 to them).

Don't:
1. Claim credit for the work of others.
2. Recklessly or falsely blame or accuse others.
3. Take advantage of another's mistakes or ignorance.

C5.2. Making Fair Decisions

In making decisions that affect others, demonstrate the trait of fairness through the following.
1. Be open-minded and objective. They give everyone affected by a decision the chance to tell their side of the story.
2. Consider the merits of all evidence relevant to a just resolution.
3. Be impartial.
4. Consciously set aside personal feelings (bias or favoritism) that might interfere with objectivity.

C5.3. Proportionality

Understand that the principle of fairness requires that imposed consequences for misconduct are 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 is neither too lenient nor severe.

C5.4. Complexity of Fairness

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

C6. CARING

Educators should teach students to understand that caring (including the virtues of compassion, kindness, benevolence, altruism, charity, generosity, and sharing) is the heart of ethics. Students should strive to demonstrate a concern for the well-being of other people and all living things by displaying compassion for those in pain or need by providing support in the form of donations and/or personal service.

C6.1. Basic Dos and Don'ts of Caring

Do:
Accept their moral duty to be caring and demonstrate caring by:
1. being kind, compassionate, and empathetic to everyone (even those who do not 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. considering the needs and well-being of all affected by their actions (i.e., stakeholders).

Don't:
1. be mean, cruel, or callous to the feelings of others, and
2. try to take advantage of another's mistakes or ignorance.

C6.2. Caring Moderates Other Ethical Duties

Understand that the virtue of caring frequently interacts with other ethical principles, requiring them to be careful that their commitment to honesty and candor does not cause them to:
1. be unnecessarily hurtful or offensively blunt (e.g., "Your speech was awful.")
2. fail to be merciful and forgiving in their pursuit of fairness and justice, or
3. not condone or ignore dangerous and harmful conduct while respecting another's privacy.

C7. GOOD CITIZENSHIP

Educators should teach students to demonstrate good citizenship. Students should fulfill their civic and social responsibilities and contribute to the well-being of the communities in which they are members (including their home, school, neighborhood, country, and greater world).

C7.1. Understand and Appreciate Civil Rights

Understand and appreciate the rights within the concepts of freedom and liberty that are embodied in the Constitution and Bill of Rights, including freedom of speech and religion, the right to vote and run for elected office, and the right to be treated fairly under the law.

C7.2. Understand and Fulfill Civic Responsibilities

Understand and strive to fulfill the responsibilities of citizenship, including a duty to abide by the law and respect the rights of others, cooperate with law enforcement to identify and apprehend criminals, 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

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. Understand the special role that civil disobedience plays in the democratic process and the extraordinary conditions that must exist to justify unlawful conduct.
2. Set an example of rule-following for their peers even when inconvenient (e.g., returning their shopping carts or abiding by the ten item or less rule in markets).

C7.4. Participate in the Democratic Process

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. Exercise their civil rights fairly and responsibly. They examine and evaluate political claims and allegations to determine for themselves what is true. They maintain an open mind so they can objectively assess the political positions of others.
2. 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. Improve Their School's Climate

Demonstrate good citizenship by promoting and modeling responsible, respectful, caring, honest, and fair conduct to create and maintain a safe and positive school climate where all students feel physically and emotionally safe, cared for, and respected.
1. Personally refrain from and discourage others from all forms of bullying and other forms of mean and unkind conduct.
2. Do their share to keep their school clean, attractive, and a comfortable place to learn and grow.

C7.6. Safeguard the Environment

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

SCHOOL CULTURE 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. SUPPORTIVE AND RESPECTFUL

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 a 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 working 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 positive models for students while leading to their own professional and personal satisfaction.

SC2. DEDICATION TO STAKEHOLDERS

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

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

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 do not 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.

SC2.5. Professional Development Opportunities

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. COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE
- -

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 on 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 SCHOOL COMMUNITY
- -

The school has administrative leaders who are responsible for the development, operation, and sustainability of high-quality practices that 1) enhance engagement in teaching, learning, and school-wide activities, 2) address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage those who have become disengaged, and 3) 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 address 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 the 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 the 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. SAFE 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. ENCOURAGING 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 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 and 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 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.

ACHIEVING THE OUTCOMES SPECIFIED IN THESE STANDARDS

We recognize that supplementing pre-existing educational responsibilities with additional academic, social-emotional, and character development outcomes presents significant challenges requiring time and skills. Below, we provide guidance on how schools can effectively and efficiently use these standards to enhance educational outcomes while enhancing the achievement of current educational goals. In addition, this edition of the standards includes grade level implementation guidelines that provide practical and effective strategies, guidelines, and additional information to help educators promote some of the most important standards.

HOW SCHOOLS CAN USE THE STANDARDS

Individual schools or school districts can:
1. adopt and promulgate the standards and discuss the best way to implement individual or groups of standards with faculty,
2. provide ongoing professional development for teachers to ensure their ability to effectively foster positive beliefs, values, and social-emotional skills in students,
3. develop assessment tools, such as self-reflections, group discussions, and projects to evaluate students' progress in each standard,
4. collaborate with parents, counselors, and community organizations to reinforce these standards and provide additional resources for students' development,
5. individual teachers in regular academic courses or special classes (e.g., leadership or senior problems) can use these standards daily or weekly to enrich their current classes by consciously choosing which standards best fit their lesson plans, and
6. encourage parents and caregivers to use these standards to supplement students' in-school education.

CREATE A SUPPORTIVE AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOL CULTURE (DOMAIN 4)

Establish classroom and school-wide norms and an environment that reflects and promotes all dimensions of these standards.
1. Encourage students to appreciate diversity and understand the value of different perspectives.
2. Recognize and praise students privately and publicly when they demonstrate positive behaviors to reinforce desired conduct and build their sense of pride in acting ethically.
3. Present age-appropriate scenarios and have students act out different roles requiring them to identify with a person in that role, discuss problems, and propose solutions. Review the activity choices and outcomes, emphasizing the ethical and emotional aspects of the choices they propose, including the impact of their decisions on others.
4. Encourage collaborative learning by group projects to teach teamwork, perspective-taking, and collaborative problem-solving.
5. Facilitate peer feedback sessions to foster a culture of constructive criticism and self-improvement.
6. Teach and model conflict resolution and communication skills, emphasizing respect, active listening, and finding mutually beneficial solutions.
7. Create opportunities for moral action with service-learning projects that connect classroom learning with meaningful community service to help students develop empathy and perspective-taking and understand the value of good citizenship and their power to be a positive change agent.

EMBEDDED IN CURRICULUM CONTENT

Weave concepts, strategies, and frameworks set forth in these standards into existing lessons with pre-planned or spontaneous discussions of situations and actions arising from course content (e.g., the choices, consequences, and ethical implications of actions of characters in literature and history). Introduce and discuss hypothetical and/or real-world analogous scenarios.
1. Explicitly teach and apply critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making frameworks, including possible alternative courses of action.
2. Discuss the impact of emotions on the behavior of characters and the pertinence of SEL concepts, including self- and social-awareness, management of emotions, relationship skills and qualities (e.g., communication or empathy), and the absence or presence of performance traits such as diligence, perseverance, positivity, resilience, and adaptability.

3. Highlight and discuss choices made, the ethical dimension of actions, moral dilemmas faced, indications of character development, and the presence or absence of core moral character traits (trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship).

DISCUSS STUDENT SITUATIONS

Engage students in identifying and discussing situations they and their classmates face (e.g., bullying, peer pressure, family conflicts, or social media abuses) and confusing emotions inherent in adolescence (including anger, anxiety, depression, and alienation). Discuss how the critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, SEL skills, and the ethical values and character traits outlined in these standards can help students more effectively deal with these situations.

DISCUSS REAL-WORLD SITUATIONS

Apply intellectual, social, emotional, and moral character standards in the context of real-life events, news stories, and media messages. In discussing current events and policy disagreements, teach and advocate the value of informed citizenship and discernment based on the reliability, sufficiency, and credibility of underlying facts.
1. Encourage students to apply the concepts embodied in the standards to non-school work, family, and social situations.
2. Help students critically analyze advertisements, movies, and social media content. Discuss communication skills to interpret overt and implied messaging and how these messages might promote or discourage ethical values and behavior.

BEHAVIORAL ISSUES

While dealing with behavioral issues, in private interactions with students or the whole class, seek opportunities to:
1. explicitly teach students critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making strategies and frameworks set out in these standards, including how to ask probing questions, evaluate the credibility of evidence, analyze arguments, and distinguish between facts and opinions,
2. explain the various aspects of emotional intelligence and social-emotional skills and their application to their lives, including emotional regulation, empathy, resilience, and effective communication, and
3. introduce ethical values, principles, and moral character traits and the Golden Rules as a guide to ethical conduct. Stress the importance of thinking ahead, considering the rights and needs of others, practical and ethical consequences of actions, and the power and responsibility of each student to be a person of good moral character.

ENGAGE WITH PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY

Offer workshops for parents explaining the school's commitment to cultivating the qualities outlined in these standards. Provide encouragement and resources to help parents participate in developing the knowledge, beliefs, values, mindsets, skills, and traits of these qualities at home.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Involve community members or experts in discussions or activities related to ethical decision-making and social responsibility, providing students with real-world insights and examples.

THE TEAM FRAMEWORK

How to foster the beliefs, values, mindsets, skills, and character traits prescribed in these standards.

Wherever and whenever possible, educators should use the TEAM framework to cultivate the values, mindsets, habits, and character traits encompassed in these standards.
1. **Teach.** Instruct students about the nature and importance of good character, including age-appropriate versions of the values and behaviors. Give age-appropriate definitions and examples of each value.
2. **Enforce.** Highlight and praise behavior demonstrating particular values and discourage bad behavior by consistently imposing fair and consistent consequences sufficient to deter future misbehavior.
3. **Advocate.** Actively promote and support the development of positive character traits both in and beyond the classroom through vocal encouragement to inspire students to develop and display ethical behavior.
4. **Model**. Model positive ethical values and behaviors, keeping in mind that students are always watching.

FOSTER POSITIVE (KEY) BELIEFS

Use the TEAM framework to instill positive beliefs that foster positive behavior and mindsets, which lead to values and character traits.

1. Explicitly teach and advocate key belief statements (i.e., positive values) as facts by writing them on the board or projecting them on a screen, providing written lists and quotations, and displaying reinforcing posters.
2. Continuously and overtly advocate statements the educator wants the student to adopt as true.
3. Highlight examples of the belief's value while discussing course content.
4. Demonstrate key beliefs through modeling, showing young people how these beliefs manifest in real-life decisions and behaviors.
5. Encourage open dialogues about beliefs, values, and ethics, allowing young people to explore and articulate their convictions.
6. Provide experiential opportunities promoting self-discovery of the wisdom of the promoted belief.

ELIMINATE LOCK BELIEFS

Identify negative (lock) beliefs in context. Discuss whether these beliefs are really true and how they damage mental well-being and impede success and happiness. Address any underlying societal, cultural, or personal factors that may contribute to the development or reinforcement of these beliefs.

Model Standards for Student Development Elementary Implementation Guidelines

ACADEMIC DOMAIN

The Academic Domain focuses on the educator's responsibility to 1) cultivate cognitive skills, 2) instill positive beliefs and mindsets about learning, 3) promote behaviors that improve academic performance, and 4) foster the development of character traits that contribute to successful learning.

JOSEPHSON INSTITUTE MODEL STANDARD	KEY STUDENT BELIEFS	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR CLASSROOM IMPLEMENTATION
A1. MOTIVATED AND COMMITTED LEARNERS **Instill students with a deep appreciation of the value of education so that they become eager and committed learners who:** 1. **love learning as a source of personal enjoyment and growth,** 2. **believe that education and learning will enrich their lives,** 3. **are motivated to do well in school and earn their diploma,** 4. **seek post-graduation educational opportunities, and** 5. **recognize that education is a key to increased job opportunities and earning potential.**	• My learning is my responsibility. • I gain the most when I learn and lose the most when I don't learn. • The more I put into my education, the more I will get out of it.	• Make connections between the skills students are developing now and opportunities for their future success in school. • Encourage students to ask questions and explore topics of interest, while creating a classroom culture where questions are a vital part of the learning process. • Provide opportunities for hands-on activities that allow students to investigate and discover new concepts. • Learning Timeline: Create a large timeline on the classroom wall where students can add a picture or a note about something new they learned each day, helping them visualize their learning journey. • Role Play Classroom: Students can take turns being the 'teacher' of the day, teaching the rest of the class something they are passionate about. This activity encourages appreciation for the learning process and the role of educators. • Reflect on what you know as a teacher and how you continuously learn new things about your area of expertise. • Using student's experiences, create opportunities to demonstrate that learning is a critical and essential part of personal growth. Show why it is advantageous and enjoyable to continue to grow and learn. • Ask open-ended questions that begin with phrases like: What would happen if … What would it be like to … Why did … How do we know that … What did you think when … --- **Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/A1.**

A2. CONFIDENT AND DILIGENT LEARNERS **Instill students with positive beliefs and mindsets.**	• It is up to me to focus and learn. • Learning to understand and do new things often takes diligent, hard work. • Learning fast isn't the same as learning well. Learning well sometimes requires allowing time for mistakes.	• Teach strategies that will help students focus, such as taking deep breaths, jotting down text, or visualizing a goal. • Show students that they are learning new things every day. • Focus praise on effort and improvement rather than grades or natural abilities. • Encourage students to reflect on the process – the things they can control, like effort, persistence, and good strategies – not on their personal traits or abilities. • Have students approach learning with a growth mindset, believing that with effort and practice, they can increase their intellectual abilities, enabling them to master new and difficult concepts and develop life skills. • Start a discussion on the power of mindset by asking students to share personal experiences where a positive or negative mindset influenced an outcome. This will help them understand the impact of beliefs on learning and performance. • Introduce a problem-based learning scenario where students must figure out how to learn a new skill (like juggling or a new language) in the most efficient way possible. They will need to research learning strategies and present their findings. • Conduct a simple experiment on memory retention by having students try to remember lists of words under different conditions (e.g., after a physical activity vs. sitting quietly). Discuss how different environments and activities can affect learning outcomes. **Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/A2.**

A3. RESPONSIBLE, ENGAGED, AUTONOMOUS, AND CONNECTED LEARNERS
 	
Inspire students to accept personal responsibility for their education so that they build connections with their teachers, classmates, and school and become self-directed learners fully engaged in all aspects of their education.
	• I will enjoy school more and be successful if I take charge of and participate in my own education.
	• I gain the most when I learn and lose the most when I don't learn.
	• I accept the responsibility of being prepared for class.
		• Provide opportunities for self-assessment of the character traits and values that are important for student success.
		• Ensure that you choose academic and character growth and development content that is applicable to the age of your students.
		• Create opportunities for students to interact with others who they may not otherwise associate.
		• Generate sentence stems and questions as regular journal or discussion prompts.
		• Prompt your students to identify a wider range of problem-solving pathways: "Who saw or did something different?" "Can you share another way to approach this challenge?"
		• Provide students with tools, such as planning sheets or task lists.
		• Support and challenge students daily to be engaged in the learning process by:
		  1. being organized and coming to class prepared,
		  2. following directions,
		  3. participating in class,

4. asking for help, and
5. taking good notes and completing assignments when due.

- Students could take part in a variety of writing exercises about the most important pastime or activity in which they participate, and the perseverance it takes to improve.
- Provide opportunities for students to organize and categorize information.
- Organize a role-playing game where each student becomes a different historical or scientific figure. They must explain their contributions to their field, helping students understand the impact of these figures on various academic disciplines.
- Bridge Building Contest: Provide students with materials like popsicle sticks, straws, and tape to construct bridges that can hold a certain weight. This hands-on activity fosters creativity, engineering thinking, and practical problem-solving skills.
- Conduct a group storytelling session where students create a story together, each adding a sentence that includes a new vocabulary word they've learned, promoting language skills and cooperative learning.

- My experiences can affect what I need to learn.
- I am able to identify the importance of speaking and writing well.

A4. KNOWLEDGEABLE, LOGICAL, CRITICAL, AND CREATIVE THINKERS

Educators should provide students with the knowledge, skills, beliefs, mindsets, and traits that help them develop progressively complex intellectual abilities, including thinking skills.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DOMAIN

This domain focuses on social and emotional qualities that enhance mental and emotional well-being and boost academic outcomes and school safety.

JOSEPHSON INSTITUTE MODEL STANDARD	KEY STUDENT BELIEFS	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR CLASSROOM IMPLEMENTATION
SE1. SELF-AWARENESS **Educators should cultivate self-awareness in students, empowering them to identify their emotions, core values, mindsets, and traits and understand how they impact their feelings, behavior, and interactions.**	• It is important to recognize and understand my emotions. • Knowing how I feel can lead to better actions. • I know how to seek help from trusted adults.	• Have students understand the effects of emotions on characters in stories. • Review a biography of a person to determine where emotions played a role in what he or she was able to accomplish. • Have students journal on understanding their emotions and their impact on others by answering these questions: What do people say, do, think, and look like when they feel a certain way? Why is it important to recognize emotions in ourselves and other people? • Create learning experiences that include specific ways to help students deal with an upsetting situation at school (e.g., being left out, losing, being rejected, being teased). • Start the class with a "Mood Meter" where students plot how they feel on a chart ranging from high energy/pleasant feelings to low energy/unpleasant feelings. This visual representation can help them recognize their emotions and discuss how these might affect their day and interactions with others. **Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/SE1.**
SE2. SELF-MANAGEMENT **Educators should destigmatize anxiety, depression, and trauma and provide students with techniques to deal with trauma or severe mental distress and help them develop mindsets, skills, and traits.**	• I have the power and responsibility to control how I respond to opportunities and challenges through the choices I make. • You can control your behaviors and how you act on your emotions.	• Start with a "What Would You Do?" scenario where students are presented with various stressful situations (like preparing for a big test or dealing with a disagreement with a friend) and discuss strategies for managing these anxieties effectively. • Organize a short role-playing activity where students act out different roles in a scenario involving peer pressure. This will help them explore and discuss different self-management strategies to maintain personal integrity and make positive choices. • Introduce a mindfulness exercise where students participate in a guided breathing technique to help manage immediate stress. Discuss as a group how such techniques can be applied in real-life situations when they feel overwhelmed or anxious. **Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/SE2.**

Standard	Student "I" statements	Application strategies
SE3 SOCIAL AWARENESS **Educators should foster social awareness skills, mindsets, and character traits to help students understand others and experience and demonstrate empathy.**	• I know how to show concern for others' well-being. • I can act compassionately and with empathy. • I am willing to show mercy and forgiveness.	• Explain and model appropriate social interactions for different situations. • Use fictional characters or celebrities to analyze positive and negative relationships. • Role-play scenarios to demonstrate and practice positive interactions that may occur within an elementary school. • Journal as to the difference between reputation and good character. **Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/SE3.**
SE4 RELATIONSHIP SKILLS **Educators should foster relationship skills, mindsets, and character traits.**	• I have the desired attitudes that will bring me happiness and success. • Working as part of a group will allow me to accomplish more than I could alone.	• Practice group or class activities that require working together. • Focus on and evaluate the process of group projects, in addition to their final products. • Establish positive personal relationships with family members, teachers, classmates, and others as a sense of belonging and emotional support. • While reading a story, illustrate the components of effective communication and how it impacts others. • Ensure that students are able to articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively through speaking and writing. **Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/SE4.**
SE5. RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING **Educators should instill in students a commitment to make decisions that align with core ethical principles and their personal values, prioritize safety and well-being, and consider short-term and long-term consequences for themselves and others affected by their choices.**	• Accept responsibility for the consequences of their words and actions. • My decisions should be based on facts and information. • I can reflect on my own knowledge and how I arrive at the opinions I have and make the decisions I make. • I realize that my behavior and the choices I make affect others.	• Provide examples so students can understand the difference between a rationalization and a rational decision. • Provide opportunities to discuss the fact that one's behavior or action taken is a result of a choice that was made. • Have students interview someone they think makes good decisions. • In groups, students can create a short story where the main character faces a dilemma. They will then illustrate how the character deals with the situation, promoting a discussion on decision-making and consequences. • Provide students with a large piece of paper to draw a decision-making tree. They can map out possible decisions stemming from a single scenario and visualize the potential outcomes of each choice. • Use examples from literature or current events to demonstrate the benefits of effective and ethical decision-making.

- Read a short story to the class with certain details omitted. Ask the students to figure out what could be missing from the story based on the clues provided, promoting critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Create relevant scenarios in which a decision must be made. Have students apply the problem-solving/decision-making framework:
  - (Stop) Encourage students to Stop long enough to think about what they are about to do. Pausing before acting is a critical first step in responsible decision-making. Use strategies like counting to five before acting or engage in deep breathing exercises so students are in a state to think clearly.
  - (Think) Help students identify the Best Possible Result by thinking about the following:
    - What is the problem?
    - Who does my decision impact? Who will be helped or hurt by what I decide?
    - What are my options?
    - What are the possible consequences of my choices?
    - What are the pros and cons of my possible choices?
  - (Act) Once you decide on your best choice, you must act upon it. Remember, you are making the choice. You are in charge but responsible for what you do.
  - (Reflect) Help students self-reflect about their choice by discussing how they felt about their decision and encourage them to share the outcomes of their decision.
- Remember to provide positive reinforcement and praise to build student confidence in their responsible decision-making skills and competencies.
- Be sure to model the steps to responsible decision-making throughout your day.

Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/SE5.

CHARACTER DOMAIN

The Character Domain focuses on three interrelated attributes which define the ethical and moral dimensions of character: moral values, principles, and traits. Moral values are the core beliefs about what is fundamentally right or wrong. Values become operational through principles and prescriptive statements that translate those beliefs into standards of conduct specifying how one should behave. When values and principles are deeply ingrained characteristics, they become traits, enduring patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving that are fundamental to a person's nature.

JOSEPHSON INSTITUTE MODEL STANDARD	KEY STUDENT BELIEFS	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR CLASSROOM IMPLEMENTATION
C1. THE ETHICAL FOUNDATION OF MORAL CHARACTER	• My character affects all parts of my life. • I am responsible for making the right choices and being a person of character. • I know what it takes to have a good character. • The formation of my character lies in my own hands. • Character Counts all the time; all the time, character counts.	• Incorporate character building into everyday lessons and activities, rather than as a stand-alone experience. • Develop a class motto. • Explain and illustrate the Six Pillars of Character® in context during academic content on a regular and consistent basis. • Model and illustrate positive examples of ethical values in action. • Have students write in their journals about character, the specific traits they are studying, and when they may see these attributes in action. • Institute a "Character Honor Roll" for your class. • Discuss how character can help in being a good student. • Have students assist in creating classroom rules based on the Six Pillars. • Designate a section in the school library that contains books with stories depicting character traits and other moral lessons. • Share an everyday hero, mentor, or source of character of yours and tell the students why and how this person has impacted you. • Publicly recognize the work of a school's 'unsung heroes' – custodians, secretaries, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, and volunteers – and connect what they do to the school's values. • Communicate with parents in appropriate ways they can help their children in promoting character and specific values while at home. This can be done by sending out monthly newsletters to parents that include references to character development in the class. **Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/C1.**

C2. TRUSTWORTHINESS

Students understand trust is essential for meaningful and lasting relationships.

- Honesty is the best policy.
- It is important to do the right thing even when it is hard.
- It's not worth to lie or cheat because it hurts your character.
- It is important to keep promises and commitments.

- Provide examples that show students the importance of trustworthiness.
- Study characters in literature who have shown loyalty through good and bad.
- Provide examples of key character in a classroom story or historical figure that demonstrated the importance of trustworthiness.
- Explore and examine people and situations within the context of the curriculum as to how issues of honesty or integrity were addressed and the consequences of their actions.
- Have students role-play scenarios in which telling the truth could hurt and then other scenarios in which telling the truth could help.
- Examine situations in which promises were broken and what the results were of the actions taken within the context of the story.
- Divide the class into small groups. Have each group develop a list of dos and don'ts for being a trustworthy person. In what ways can/do children demonstrate trustworthiness?
- Students can write or draw about someone they trust. Why do they trust that person? How important is that trust to them?

> **Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/C2.**

C3. RESPECT

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

- It is important to treat everyone with respect, even if I feel they don't deserve it.
- I will treat others the way I want to be treated.
- I need to treat everyone the same by accepting their differences, whether they are my friends or people I don't know very well.
- I must respect the personal space of others and keep my hands to myself.

- Establish an environment of civility and politeness in the classroom.
- Role-play situations in which disrespectful behavior leads to a problem. Then, change one of the disrespectful actions into one of respect.
- Use examples from current events or literature to demonstrate the effects of bullying and discuss what can be done to strive to create a culture of kindness and respect.
- Have students identify three things they could do to be a more respectful person.
- Bring in articles in which respect or disrespect are issues. Talk about who is acting respectfully in these situations, and then discuss who is acting disrespectfully. Using the articles as evidence, teach the class about the consequences of disrespectful and respectful behaviors.
- Model and practice a climate of kindness within the class.
- Brainstorm ways to make your school more respectful.
- Model and practice treating others how students want to be treated.

		Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/C3.
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 mindset), what they say and do, and who they are (their character). Responsible people are accountable for the consequences of their choices.**	• It is important for people to be included. • By my choices, I determine what kind of person I am and how others will view me. • I am responsible for my actions and their consequences. • It is an obligation that I do my best work and be my best self. • I should do what I have to do without whining or giving excuses.	• Clearly explain rules and consequences and hold students accountable for their actions. • Model affirming and supportive language, even in times of stress or difficulty. • Have students role-play situations in which the action (or lack of action) has a great impact on a character. • Explain and illustrate how we can choose our attitudes (even when we can't control our situations). • Create a list together of ways in which students can help others. • Use historical examples, literary characters, or current figures to model how each individual is responsible for his/her own character. • Have students keep records of their own successes and missteps. • Examine the consequences of not being accountable for actions in literature, history, or current events. • Have students write a letter to their five-year-old selves giving advice on how to be successful. • Ask this question of students: What responsibilities do you believe you personally have for: 1) yourself, 2) your family, 3) your community, 4) the world? • Instruct students to write at least five things they could say to themselves when they are tempted to act irresponsibly. Explain the meaning and significance of each. • Describe what this society might be like if nobody was accountable for his or her actions or if nobody kept their commitments.
		Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/C4.
C5. FAIRNESS **Students strive to be fair and just in all their actions.**	• I play by the rules. • I think about how my conduct affects others. • I don't take advantage of others.	• Share articles describing situations in which fairness is an issue. Decide who is acting fairly and who is acting unfairly in these situations. • Have students role-play a variety of situations in which people are being both unfair and fair to each other. Make lists specifying when people do not play fair. Document how students can respond appropriately. • Have students sit in a circle and pass around a ball. Each student who gets the ball shares an idea of what fairness means to them. This helps students understand different perspectives on fairness and promotes active listening.

As a class, make two lists: a list of things we sometimes do in our personal lives that are unfair and a list of things we do as a society that are unfair. What could be done to rectify these injustices so we can cross them off the list? Whose responsibility is it to correct the injustices in our society? How could students contribute to the effort?

Put literary characters or historical figures 'on trial' to determine appropriate consequences.

Provide students with drawing materials and ask them to illustrate two scenes: one showing a fair situation and another showing an unfair situation. Discuss the drawings as a class to explore why certain behaviors are seen as fair or unfair.

> **Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/C5.**

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 other people and all living things by displaying compassion for those in pain or need by providing support in the form of donations and/or personal service.

- It is important to show care and concern for others.
- I can be kind even when others are not.
- I can always find a way to help others.
- I pay attention to the feelings of others.

- Model kindness and courtesy and expect your students to do the same.
- Create a culture of kindness.
- Write a thank you note to someone in your community who did something very caring.
- Write a thank you note to a historic figure, for instance, Florence Nightingale, to thank her for what she did.
- Students could write about a real or imagined experience in which they performed a random act of caring and the results it produced.
- Divide the class into small groups. Have each group develop a list of dos and don'ts for caring behavior.
- Write two headings on the board: Caring and Uncaring. List examples underneath each heading. Then discuss what kinds of efforts could be taken to move all the items from the Uncaring column into the Caring column.
- Have students write a critique of an uncaring character from a story they have read, suggesting how he or she could have been a more caring person.

> **Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/C6.**

C6C7. GOOD CITIZENSHIP	
Students demonstrate good citizenship by fulfilling their civic and social responsibilities and contributing to the well-being of the communities in which they are members (including their home, school, neighborhood, country, and greater world).	- I am a member of many communities (school, neighborhood, and country). - I obey laws and rules. - I help make the school and community better. - Everyone must do their part to help the environment.	- Explain and illustrate the roles students fulfill in the different communities to which they belong. - Examine the effects of following or not following rules or the law. - Analyze classroom situations where we can do a better job in sharing our things and ideas. - From a news article, identify an act of poor citizenship displayed by an adult. Students could then write a letter of criticism to this person with the intention of trying to convince him or her to change. - Examine the effects of protecting (or not protecting) the environment. **Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/C7.**

Model Standards for Student Development Secondary Implementation Guidelines

ACADEMIC DOMAIN

The Academic Domain focuses on the educator's responsibility to 1) cultivate cognitive skills, 2) instill positive beliefs and mindsets about learning, 3) promote behaviors that improve academic performance, and 4) foster the development of character traits that contribute to successful learning.

JOSEPHSON INSTITUTE MODEL STANDARD	KEY STUDENT BELIEFS	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR CLASSROOM IMPLEMENTATION
A1. MOTIVATED AND COMMITTED LEARNERS **Instill students with a deep appreciation of the value of education so that they become eager and committed learners who:** 1. **love learning as a source of personal enjoyment and growth,** 2. **believe that education and learning will enrich their lives,** 3. **are motivated to do well in school and earn their diploma,** 4. **seek post-graduation educational opportunities, and** 5. **recognize that education is a key to increased job opportunities and earning potential.** **A1.1. Curiosity**	• Graduating from high school and seeking higher education opportunities will improve my life and make people who care about me proud. • My learning is my responsibility. • I gain the most when I learn and lose the most when I don't learn. • The more I put into my education, the more I will get out of it. • Curiosity prepares the brain for learning and makes subsequent learning more rewarding. • When I am curious, open-minded, and humble, I am more likely to persist through a challenge.	• Make connections between the skills students are developing now and opportunities for future success • Encourage students to ask questions, conduct research, and explore topics of interest while creating a classroom culture where questions are a vital part of the learning process. • Provide opportunities for hands-on activities and experiments that allow students to investigate and discover new concepts. • Support and encourage students to pursue personal inquiries and projects. • Foster enjoyment in acquiring new knowledge and skills and instill a desire to learn more about themselves, others, and the world around them. • Reflect on what you know as a teacher and how you continuously learn new things about your area of expertise. • Using student's experiences, create opportunities to demonstrate that learning is a critical and essential part of personal growth. Show why it is advantageous and enjoyable to continue to grow and learn. • Ask open-ended questions beginning with phrases like What would happen if … What would it be like to … Why did … How do we know that … What did you think when … • Conduct a "Question Brainstorm" session where students are asked to write down as many questions as they can about a topic they know nothing about, chosen randomly. This encourages them to think about what drives their curiosity and how questions can lead to deeper understanding and exploration. • Show a short video featuring a series of bizarre, unexplained natural phenomena or scientific experiments. After viewing, ask students to choose one phenomenon and draft a hypothesis that might explain it. This encourages critical thinking, curiosity, and the scientific method of forming hypotheses based on observation.

Trait	Student Statements	Application Strategies
Nurture the trait of curiosity and the enjoyment of acquiring new knowledge and skills. Instill a desire in students to learn more about themselves, others, and the world around them so that they ask questions and explore topics of personal interest.		• Conduct a "What If?" brainstorming session where students are given scenarios that alter everyday events or objects (e.g., "What if people could fly?" or "What if water was not transparent?") and discuss the potential impacts on daily life and the broader world. This encourages imaginative thinking and exploration of possibilities. **Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/A1.**
A2. CONFIDENT AND DILIGENT LEARNERS Instill students with positive beliefs and mindsets.	• It is up to me to focus and learn. • I can master new and difficult concepts. • I am smart enough to learn what I need to know and do to be successful. • Learning to understand and do new things often takes diligent, hard work. • Learning fast isn't the same as learning well. Learning well sometimes requires allowing time for mistakes.	• Teach strategies that will help students focus, such as taking deep breaths, jotting down text, or visualizing a goal. • Show students that they already are life-long learners, as they are learning new things in and out of school every day. • Focus praise on effort and improvement rather than grades or natural abilities. • Encourage students to reflect on the process – the things they can control, like effort, persistence, and good strategies – not on their personal traits or abilities. • Help students understand the many ways to employ effort effectively, such as seeking out challenges, setting goals, making plans, using creative strategies, and sticking with it when they are having difficulty. • Have students approach learning and other aspects of their lives with a growth mindset, believing that with focused effort and diligent practice, they can increase their basic intellectual abilities. • Provide opportunities in your daily lessons that enable students to master new and difficult concepts and develop life skills, personal attributes, and moral virtues that will enhance success in all aspects of their lives. **Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/A2.**
A3. RESPONSIBLE, ENGAGED, AUTONOMOUS, AND CONNECTED LEARNERS Inspire students to accept personal responsibility for their education so that they build connections with their teachers, classmates, and school, and	• I will enjoy school more and be successful if I take charge of and participate in my own education. • My learning is my responsibility.	• Provide opportunities for self-assessment of the character traits and values that are vitally important for student success. • Choose academic and character growth and development content that is relevant to students. • Create opportunities for students to interact with others who they may not otherwise associate. • Explain and illustrate what self-motivation and self-reliance look like with stories, exercises, and activities.

become self-directed learners fully engaged in all aspects of their education.	• I gain the most when I learn and lose the most when I don't learn.
	• I will do better in school and enjoy it more if I actively participate in events and create connections between myself and my teachers and classmates.
	• I accept the responsibility of being prepared for class and remain engaged throughout the learning process.
		• Generate sentence stems and questions as regular journal or discussion prompts.
		• Prompt your students to identify a wider range of perspectives or problem-solving pathways. "Who saw or did something different?" or "Can you share another way to approach this challenge?"
		• Teach and demonstrate how to overcome obstacles (including lack of interest, boredom, and difficulty) so students can take control of their lives and their education.
		• Provide students with tools, such as planning sheets or task lists.
		• Support and challenge students daily to be engaged in the learning process by:
		  1. being organized and coming to class prepared,
		  2. following directions,
		  3. participating in class,
		  4. taking good notes,
		  5. asking for help,
		  6. completing assignments when due, and
		  7. establishing an effective study routine.
		
		Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/A3

A4. KNOWLEDGEABLE, LOGICAL, CRITICAL, AND CREATIVE THINKERS **Educators should provide students with the knowledge, skills, beliefs, mindsets, and traits that help them develop progressively complex intellectual abilities, including thinking skills.**	• My experiences and what I assume can affect how I understand information and see the world. • I am able to identify the organizational structure and essential elements of written and oral communications and creative works. • It is important to be objective when analyzing information by considering all available information. • I am able to identify and describe strengths and weaknesses and constructively express	• Students could take part in a variety of writing exercises about the most important activity they participate in and the perseverance it takes to continue to show improvement. • Explain and illustrate how to identify reliable facts and use them in decision-making. • Provide opportunities for students to organize, classify, and categorize information. • Compare various resources on the same topic: online source vs. news article vs. social media post. • Analyze advertising targeted at students and compare it with researched information and research-based statistics. • 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).

- 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, knowledge, character, and credibility of the source.

Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/A4.

informed, evaluative judgments concerning the merit of oral communications, writings, and artistic works.

A5. EFFECTIVE PROBLEM SOLVERS AND DECISION-MAKERS

Educators should teach students the skills of critical thinking, the ability to solve problems, and make ethical, effective, and responsible decisions.

- Thinking logically will create the best path out of stressful situations.
- My decisions should be based on reliable facts and solid information.
- I understand that critical thinking demands a systematic approach to evaluating new information.
- It is important to be able to engage in an objective analysis of a topic and evaluate the available information to form a judgment.
- I can reflect on my own knowledge and how I arrive at the opinions I have and the decisions I make.

- Help students understand that their experiences and what they assume can affect how they understand information and see the world.
- Use examples from literature or current events to demonstrate the benefits of effective and ethical decision-making.
- Connect with academic content to empower students to:
  o Resist acceptance or rejection of claims prior to a conscientious effort to analyze, evaluate, and interpret information and opinions objectively and logically.
  o Identify personal assumptions and biases that may subconsciously shape their perspective.
- Develop the skill of discernment by analyzing print or various media sources to discuss current controversies and:
  o Evaluate Credibility: Assess the credibility of claims by examining supporting evidence, the expertise and historical reliability of the source, and the potential for political bias or motives to deceive or distort information.
  o Detect Misinformation: Recognize the prevalence of false and misleading information in digital environments and be vigilant to detect common tactics used to spread misinformation (e.g., fake, false, and misleading text, images, audio, and video produced by artificial intelligence technologies), particularly regarding scientific, historical, and political claims influenced by partisan agendas.
  o Apply Skepticism: Approach implausible, unlikely, or "too good to be true" claims with common sense and skepticism, especially those that contradict or seek to debunk generally accepted scientific or historical propositions.

A5.2 BEST POSSIBLE RESULT FRAMEWORK

Educators should develop students' ability to apply this eight-step problem-

- I can make informed decisions when I gather and analyze the information.
- I can make the best decisions if I consider all

Create relevant scenarios in which a decision must be made. Have students apply the problem-solving/decision-making framework to arrive at the best possible result. (BPR)

1. Stop and Think. The more important a decision, the more important it is to avoid impulsive choices driven by emotions or inadequate information.
2. Identify the BPR. Determine the outcome you want to achieve by determining the boundaries of the problem to be addressed. Articulate a clear statement of

solving/decision-making framework to produce the Best Possible Result (BPR).	the options carefully and thoughtfully.
	• A strong decision-making process will help me make better decisions, which will lead to better outcomes. • I realize that my behavior and the choices I make affect others.

the desired outcome, ensuring that the BPR is legal, ethical, effective, and efficient.

3. Assess Information. Determine what is known, what claims need to be verified, and what additional information is necessary.
4. Identify Stakeholders. Identify who will be affected by the decision and demonstrate empathy and perspective-taking to analyze how actions would impact and be interpreted by people of different backgrounds.
5. Brainstorm Options. Develop a list of all options likely to accomplish the BPR, recognizing there's rarely a single 'right' answer and optimal solutions may be viewed differently by various stakeholders.
6. Filter Out Bad Options. Eliminate options that 1) are unethical or illegal, not feasible, or 2) are likely to cause significant negative unintended consequences.
7. Choose and Implement. Make a timely decision and implement it.
8. Monitor and Modify. Monitor whether the action is or has achieved the BPR and make whatever adjustments are necessary.

Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/A5

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DOMAIN

This domain focuses on social and emotional qualities that enhance mental and emotional well-being and boost academic outcomes and school safety.

JOSEPHSON INSTITUTE MODEL STANDARD	KEY STUDENT BELIEFS	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR CLASSROOM IMPLEMENTATION
SE1. SELF-AWARENESS **Educators should cultivate self-awareness in students, empowering them to identify their emotions, core values, mindsets, and traits and understand how they impact their feelings, behaviors, and interactions.**	• It is important to recognize and understand my emotions. • Knowing how I feel can lead to better actions and decisions. • I am able to accurately recognize my own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. • I know how to seek help from trusted adults or mental health professionals if I experience severe and prolonged depression or the inclination to harm myself or others.	• Have students analyze the effects of emotions on characters in stories, historical narratives, or contemporary issues. • Instead of instinctively acting on their emotions, encourage students to think about them and find constructive ways to act on them. • Review a biography of a person in the context of your curriculum to determine where emotions played a role in what they were able to accomplish. • Have students journal on understanding their emotions and the impact on others by responding to these questions. What do people say, do, think, and look like when they feel different ways? Why is it important to recognize emotions in ourselves and other people? • Introduce a short video of athletes or public figures discussing how self-awareness has played a role in their personal and professional success. Follow this by asking students to reflect on and share how self-awareness could benefit their own future aspirations and daily interactions. • Provide tools to help students self-regulate emotions and actions. • Create learning experiences that include specific ways to help students deal with an upsetting situation at school (e.g., being left out, losing, being rejected, or being teased). • Organize a Socratic seminar around the question, "What responsibilities do individuals have to understand and address social issues in their communities?" Provide a few short readings or statistics on a current social issue to spark discussion and encourage students to draw connections between their own lives and the topic at hand. **Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/SE1**
SE2. SELF-MANAGEMENT **Educators should destigmatize anxiety, depression, and trauma, and provide students with techniques to deal with trauma or**	• I have the power and responsibility to control how I respond to opportunities and	• Provide personal support by acknowledging the student's loss and expressing genuine sympathy, letting the student know you recognize their pain and are there for them.

severe mental distress and help them develop mindsets, skills, and traits.		
	challenges through the choices I make. • You can control your behaviors and how you act based on your emotions. • I will benefit from a range of supportive strategies and accommodations designed to enhance my learning environment and emotional well-being. • I have the necessary tools to thrive academically and socially while addressing the emotional challenges that I may face at school and in the community.	• Remind the student of a time when they felt overwhelmed but made it through (a tough test or an illness). Strive to connect these experiences to their ability to get through this, too. • Normalize their emotions by explaining that a wide range of reactions to loss is normal and that there is no single "right" way to deal with anxiety, depression, or trauma. • Encourage expression by providing opportunities for the student to express feelings through writing, art, or music (therapeutic outlets for grief). • Create a supportive environment and foster an inclusive and caring classroom where students feel safe expressing emotions. • Connect students to resources by informing the school counselor or other support staff who can provide individualized crisis support. • Introduce coping skills and strategies such as mindfulness, deep breathing exercises, or guided imagery to help manage moments of overwhelming emotion. • Promote self-care by urging students to establish self-care routines and encourage regular exercise, adequate sleep, and healthy eating habits. • Adapt academic expectations by being flexible with deadlines and providing accommodations as needed. Recognize that the student's ability to concentrate and perform academically may be impacted. • Inspire resilience by suggesting books, movies, videos, and stories of individuals who have overcome personal tragedies and challenges while discussing the themes of resilience, perseverance, and hope in these stories. • Reinforce a growth mindset and continuously promote the idea that it is possible to learn and grow from difficult experiences (without minimizing the pain of the current loss) by praising efforts and small accomplishments that emphasize progress. • Encourage participation in activities by motivating students to participate in activities they enjoy or have shown interest in, whether academic, artistic, or athletic, to help rebuild confidence and find moments of joy. • Maintain open lines of communication with the student's caregivers and any involved mental health professionals to ensure a coordinated support effort. • Teach students to deal with anxiety and depression by encouraging them to use any or all of these proven strategies: o Re-framing. Show students how to change the way they interpret and think about negative experiences or thoughts and find more positive or constructive meanings. Reframing is a form of positive thinking and looks

for the silver lining. Examples: 1) "I failed my job interview; I'm not good enough." to "The job interview didn't go as planned, but I learned a lot about what I can improve on for next time." 2) "Nothing ever goes right in my life; it's hopeless." to "I've encountered many challenges, but I have the power to make positive changes and influence the outcome of my future endeavors."

- ○ Positive Self-Talk. Advocate countering negative self-beliefs with kinder, more realistic ones (e.g., "I can't deal with this." Is replaced by "I've overcome many things like this before and I can do it again.").
- ○ Distraction. Urge students to engage in activities that redirect focus away from negativity (e.g., books, movies, puzzles, or video games).
- ○ Helping Others. Helping someone else shifts focus outward and increases self-worth and a sense of value.

Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/SE2.

SE3 SOCIAL AWARENESS

Educators should foster social awareness skills, mindsets, and character traits to help students understand others and experience and demonstrate empathy.

- I know how to show concern for others' well-being.
- I can act compassionately and with empathy.
- I am willing to show mercy and forgiveness.
- I realize that my reputation is on display when I interact with others.
- By understanding and accepting differences in race, culture, religion, and abilities, students can create an inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone.

- Explain and model appropriate social interactions for different situations.
- Use fictional characters or celebrities to analyze positive and negative relationships.
- Role-play scenarios to demonstrate and practice positive interactions that may occur within a setting dealing with adults in social situations or workplace environments.
- Journal about the difference between reputation and good character. How does reputation and character impact our relationships with others?
- Begin the lesson with a role-playing activity where students are assigned different social roles or identities (e.g., a CEO, an unhoused person, a high school teacher, or a foreign exchange student). After a brief interaction scenario, have students discuss the assumptions they made about others and reflect on the impact of these assumptions on their interactions.
- Show a short video clip from a documentary or news segment that highlights a social issue affecting a community different from that of your students. Follow this with a guided discussion encouraging students to express their initial reactions and explore the root causes of the issue, promoting empathy and deeper understanding.

Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/SE3.

| SE4 RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

Educators should foster relationship skills, mindsets, and character traits. | • I have the desired mindsets and attitudes that will bring me happiness and success.
• I have to exercise flexibility and a willingness to be helpful in making necessary compromises to accomplish a common goal.
• It is important to demonstrate the ability and willingness to pursue common goals as part of a team, constructively participate in cooperative learning, and communicate effectively with people who have diverse styles, views, and backgrounds.
• Working productively with others, as being part of a team or group, will allow me to accomplish more than I could alone. | • Model and illustrate the life skills that will help achieve success.
• Assign clear and specific roles and responsibilities during group work.
• Practice group or class activities that require working together.
• Illustrate techniques for compromise when it is evident in the discussion of specific content.
• Focus on and evaluate the process of group projects in addition to their final products.
• Examine careers based on your subject matter and look at the roles collaboration and team skills would play.
• Encourage students to establish positive personal relationships with family members, teachers, classmates, and others as a source of companionship, a sense of belonging, intellectual stimulation, and emotional support.
• Encourage students to preserve important relationships by demonstrating a willingness to compromise, apologize, acknowledge accountability, offer and accept forgiveness, express remorse, and take meaningful actions to make amends for their mistakes.
• While reading a story or discussing the content of your subject matter, explain and illustrate the core components of effective communication and how it impacts others.
• Have students prepare and deliver explanatory and persuasive arguments and presentations.
• Have students research a recent world/local event and adopt the perspective of someone directly involved in what has happened or in the response.
• Ensure that students can articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively through speaking and writing.
• Have students conduct an interview with someone from the local community.
• Have students research, organize, and present historical information in clear, complete, and effective formats.
• Ask students to identify strengths and weaknesses and constructively express criticism concerning the merit of oral communications, writings, performances, and artistic works.
• Have students utilize a debate format to provide relevancy of course material to everyday issues.

Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/SE4. |

| SE5. RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

Educators should instill students with:

- **a commitment to make decisions that align with core ethical principles and students' values,**
- **a desire to prioritize safety and well-being, and**
- **the ability to consider short-term and long-term consequences for themselves and others affected by their choices.** | - I accept responsibility (i.e., accountability) for the consequences of my words and actions, recognizing an obligation to avoid both intentional and unintentional harm to others.
- I can make healthy choices to protect my well-being by eating well and getting sufficient sleep and exercise. I refrain from self-harm, eating disorders, abuse of prescription drugs, alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, and other intoxicating or mind-altering substances.
- I can demonstrate self-reliance by striving to live independently, relying on my own resources, capabilities, judgment, and emotional strength rather than depending on others to do things for me or tell me what to think or feel. | - Teach students to be rational and reflective and apply their critical thinking skills to ensure that their decisions are thoughtful and based on logic and reasoning. They think ahead to anticipate the possible consequences of their choices.
- Teach students to be ethical and responsible. Have students evaluate the ethical dimensions of their choices and ensure that they honor core ethical principles.
- Provide scenarios that allow students to determine a course of action that is based on rational decision–making.
- While discussing a fictional story, nonfiction writing, or historical document, ask if an effective decision was made. Ensure that students can grasp alternative choices and their potential consequences.
- Provide opportunities to discuss the fact that one's behavior or action is a result of a choice that was made.
- Use literary works or historical documents to discuss if the choices made were rational or rationalizations.
- Provide students with a variety of media presentations of the same story and analyze how the reporting is different depending on the media outlet.
- Ensure that students understand that responsible decision–making affects interpersonal and group relationships.
- Use case studies in media and literature to illustrate how our choices will have an impact on others.
- Have students interview someone they think displays ethical actions.

Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/SE5. |

CHARACTER DOMAIN

The Character Domain focuses on three interrelated attributes which define the ethical and moral dimensions of character: moral values, principles, and traits. Moral values are the core beliefs about what is fundamentally right or wrong. Values become operational through principles, prescriptive statements that translate those beliefs into standards of conduct specifying how one should behave. When values and principles are deeply ingrained characteristics, they become traits, enduring patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving that are fundamental to a person's nature.

JOSEPHSON INSTITUTE MODEL STANDARD	KEY STUDENT BELIEFS	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR CLASSROOM IMPLEMENTATION
C1. THE ETHICAL FOUNDATION OF MORAL CHARACTER **C1.1. Universal Ethical Values** **These standards set out specific educational outcomes to guide efforts to cultivate good moral character. It uses the widely accepted framework of universal ethical values called The Six Pillars of Character:® trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship.** **It provides a common ethical framework that underpins human interactions and the foundation of moral conduct.** **The six universal values provide schools with a common language critical to establishing an ethical, supportive school culture.**	• I am responsible for making the right choices and being a person of character. • It is important for my reputation to reflect my true self. • I know what it takes to have good character. • It is important for me to do all I can in my words and actions to be an ethical person. • Character not only defines who I am, it determines my future. • The formation of my character lies in my own hands. • I realize that character is ethics in action.	• Incorporate character building into everyday lessons and activities, rather than as a stand-alone experience. • Start the lesson with a real-world scenario: Present a story of a public figure who faced a moral dilemma. Ask students to analyze the situation and discuss in groups what they would have done differently, focusing on the moral principles involved. • Develop a class motto or create student-developed personal mission statements. • Conduct a quick role-play activity where students are given characters with specific moral traits. Have them interact based on a scripted scenario to see how different characters' moral values influence their decisions and interactions. • Introduce a controversial moral issue from recent news and have students engage in a Socratic seminar. Encourage them to explore the ethical dimensions of the issue, challenge each other's views respectfully, and consider the impact of their moral decisions on society. • Discuss responsible social media interactions through the lens of the Six Pillars of Character. • Consistently tie academic content to the Six Pillars of Character. • Model and illustrate positive examples of ethical values in action. • Have students write in journals about a character based on a prompt, an essay, or their understanding of a student-based or school-wide scenario. • Read and discuss biographies of accomplished individuals. Encourage students to be discerning in order to see that an individual may have flaws but still be capable of admirable actions. • Ensure as a teacher that you model and illustrate the importance of ethics and values in schoolwork and beyond. • During academic content, highlight positive examples of ethical values. Or, highlight a poor choice and discuss what decision could have produced the best possible result.

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- Have students write in their journals about character, the specific traits they are studying, and when or where they may see these attributes in action.

Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/C1.

Standard	Student understandings	Application strategies
C2. TRUSTWORTHINESS **Educators should instill students with the understanding that trust is essential for meaningful and lasting relationships.**	• I will have more opportunities in life if I am a person of integrity. • It is important to do the right thing even when it is hard. • It's not worth it to lie or cheat because it hurts your character. • It is important to keep promises and commitments. • It is better to try and fail and learn from the process than to take shortcuts by cheating. • If I am always honest, I don't have to remember what I said.	• Provide examples that demonstrate the importance of trustworthiness. • Study historical figures and characters in literature who have exemplified loyalty in good and bad situations. • Examine situations (historical, literary, or current) in which promises were broken and what the results were. • Role-play scenarios where the truth could hurt and other scenarios where it could help. • Within the context of the curriculum, determine a time when trust was lost. Was this trust ever regained? How? • Many people complain that political leaders cannot be trusted. Develop a checklist for evaluating the trustworthiness of political leaders. Test out your checklist by listening to a politician speaking on TV or by what is written in an article or news story. • Divide the class into small groups. Have each group develop a list of dos and don'ts for being a trustworthy person. Have them give oral reports to the class addressing the following questions. What happens when people live in accordance with these guidelines? What happens when they don't? How does trustworthy/untrustworthy behavior affect our community and society? **Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/C2.**
C3. RESPECT **Educators should instill students with the understanding that the well-being and dignity of all people are important simply because they are fellow human beings, and they treat every individual with respect, judging them on their character and competencies without regard to race, religion, sexual orientation,**	• It is important to treat everyone with respect, even if I feel they don't deserve it. • I need to treat everyone the same by accepting their differences, whether they are my friends or people I don't know very well.	• Model and practice treating others how students want to be treated. • Establish an environment of civility and politeness in the classroom. • Role-play situations in which disrespectful behavior leads to hostility or violence. Then, change one of the disrespectful actions into one of respect. • Model and practice a climate of kindness and respect within the class. • Brainstorm ways to make your school more respectful. • Use examples from current events or literature to demonstrate the effects of bullying and discuss what can be done to strive to create a culture of kindness and respect. • Research articles or news stories describing situations in which respect or disrespect are issues. Talk about who is acting respectfully in these situations, and

political ideology, gender, age, or other physical or personal characteristics.

- It is important that all stakeholders know what they need to know; I will not withhold any information that will help others.
- I will treat others the way I want to be treated.
- I seek to affirm, support, and encourage others rather than humiliate, discourage, or demean them.

- then discuss who is acting disrespectfully. Using the articles as evidence, teach about the consequences of disrespectful and respectful behaviors.
- How does government "of, by, and for the people" depend on respect? Have students connect the concepts of democracy and respect. What is it about the concept of democracy that relies upon mutual respect among people? How is the very concept of democracy related to respect for the individual?
- Have students identify three things they could do to be a more respectful person. They should consider how respectful behavior would affect their relationships with others.

Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/C3.

C4. RESPONSIBILITY

Educators should teach students about the trait of responsibility.

Students will learn how to take ownership of their lives and acknowledge their power to:

- choose what they think (including their attitudes and mindsets),
- what they say and do,
- who they are (their character), and
- be accountable for the consequences of their choices.

- By my choices, I determine what kind of person I am and how others will view me.
- I am responsible for my actions and their consequences.
- It's up to me to have a positive attitude, which is more likely to lead to positive results.
- I should do what I have to do without whining or giving excuses.

- Explain and illustrate responsible actions.
- Clearly explain rules and consequences and hold students accountable for their actions.
- Model affirming and supportive language, even in times of stress or difficulty.
- Examine the consequences of not being accountable for actions in literature, history, or current events.
- Have students role-play situations in which the action (or lack of action) has a great impact on a character.
- Explain and illustrate how we can choose our attitudes (even when we can't control our situations).
- Have students write an essay about the relationship between their age and level of responsibility. How do responsibilities differ for people their age and for older adults? How has their sense of responsibility changed as they have gotten older? At what age should we become totally responsible and accountable for our actions?
- Instruct students to write at least five things they could say to themselves when they are tempted to act irresponsibly. Explain the meaning and significance of each.
- Encourage students to describe in writing, orally, or drawing what this society might be like if nobody was accountable for their actions.

Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/C4.

C5. FAIRNESS **Educators should teach students to strive to be fair and just in all their actions.**	• When I take advantage of others, it is unfair to them. • Having a clear system for making decisions promotes fairness. • I should treat all people equitably based on their merits and competencies. • People deserve to be treated fairly in all situations. • It is important to have pre-established rules that are consistently applied. • I understand the different perspectives of others when determining what is fair.	• Share news articles describing situations in which fairness is an issue. Decide who is acting fairly and who is acting unfairly in these situations. • Write about how the legal system in a democracy attempts to administer fairness or justice. • Have students role-play a variety of situations in which people are being both unfair and fair to each other. Make lists specifying when people do not play fair. Document how students can respond appropriately. • As a class, make two lists. Make a list of things we sometimes do in our personal lives that are unfair and a list of things we do as a society that are unfair. What could be done to rectify these injustices so we can cross them off the list? Whose responsibility is it to correct the injustices in our society? How could students contribute to the effort? • Examine a school rule from the differing viewpoints of students, teachers, parents, and administrators and why each stakeholder finds it fair or unfair. • One aspect of fairness is equal opportunity. Have students do a research study in your school to see if students feel that they have equal opportunities. Are there groups of students in your school who don't think they do? Is there a group of students in your school who feel that they're being treated unfairly? What could be done to address these complaints? Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/C5.
C6. CARING **Educators should teach students to understand that caring (including the virtues of compassion, kindness, benevolence, altruism, charity, generosity, and sharing) is the heart of ethics.** **Students should strive to demonstrate a concern for the well-being of other people and all living things by displaying compassion for those in pain or in need by providing support in the**	• It is important to show care and concern for others. • I can be kind even when others are not. • I can always find a way to help others. • I should act compassionately and with empathy. • I should practice charity, make sacrifices, and show gratitude. • I should show mercy and forgiveness.	• Model kindness and courtesy and expect your students to do the same. • Create a culture of kindness. • Engage students in service-based projects to practice the intrinsic values. These projects will benefit others and your students. • Ask students to write a thank you note to someone in your community who showed caring. • Have students write a critique of an uncaring character from a story they have read and suggest how they could have been a more caring person. • Ask students to imagine that they have inherited $50,000, and they want to spend it charitably. What would they do with it, and why? What effect would it have on the people they would be helping? • Introduce a "Kindness Challenge" where students are asked to perform a random act of kindness outside of school and then write a brief reflection on the experience. Discuss as a class how small actions can create a ripple effect of positivity and change.

form of donations and/or personal service.		• Present a real-life scenario where someone is facing a difficult situation, such as moving to a new school or dealing with a family crisis. Divide students into groups and have them brainstorm practical ways to show compassion and support to the person in the scenario. **Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/C6.**
C7. GOOD CITIZENSHIP **Educators should teach students to demonstrate good citizenship.** **Students should fulfill their civic and social responsibilities and contribute to the well-being of the communities in which they are members (including their home, school, neighborhood, country, and greater world).**	• I am a member of many communities (e.g., school, neighborhood, country). • I must contribute to my community and fulfill my responsibilities. • I need to maintain an open mind, a willingness to re-examine my own positions, and have the objectiveness to consider others' arguments and beliefs. • My community needs my positive contributions. • Everyone must do their part to help the environment.	• Explain and illustrate the roles students fulfill in the different communities to which they belong. • Have students examine the effects of following or not following the law. • Ask students to analyze and determine what situations call for civil disobedience. • Students can examine the effects of protecting (or not protecting) the environment. • Ask students to study the interactions between people and their environment. • Have students write a speech describing the essential balance of rights and responsibilities in our democracy. • Students can study how the preservation of our rights depends on our exercise of responsibility in a democracy. • Identify individuals or organizations making a positive difference in your community. Work in groups to interview them and then give a report on how they got started, why they do what they do, and how they have accomplished everything they have done. • Ask students to study the interactions between people within different communities. What kind of conflict occurs? Provide specific examples of what can happen for the good of all when people work together. **Additional application strategies, quotations, lessons, activities, and videos can be found at CharacterCounts.org/C7.**