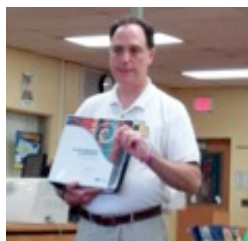


## First Organizational Meeting of the Northern Region Networking Center of the NJASECD

On May 23, 2012, the Northern Region Networking Center held its first meeting at North Boulevard School in Pompton Plains, New Jersey. North Boulevard is one of three New Jersey Schools that have been named 2012 National Schools of Character. Twenty participants watched presentations given by teachers and students from North Boulevard showcasing programs which helped to infuse character education throughout the school. These programs included the Heart Club, Peace Makers, Colors (autism), Character Council, and School Ambassadors.



Charlene Valero, a fifth grade teacher at the school also spoke about the school's Holocaust curriculum and an anti-bullying mandate. Students who had participated in the unit joined her, giving an articulate description about the meaning of good character for them in the fabric of their school.



Following a light dinner, Jerry Cammarata, principal of North Boulevard School, shared some reflections on applying for SSOC/NSOC recognition, and the ensuing site visit to the school by Dr. David Wangaard. He also spoke to the importance of using the CEP "Eleven Principles" as a guide to the development of a solid foundation for character education in the school and North Boulevard's use of related arts teachers as a conduit for character education lessons in the school.

The meeting ended with an open discussion about the future direction of the Northern Region Networking Center. Aside from onsite meetings for professional development and networking, the group expressed an interest in exploring



virtual networking through Websites and blogs. The participants liked the idea of developing a virtual Professional



Learning Community on SECD. The next steps for our Regional Network will be rolled out to the membership

with an anticipated start date in early fall 2012.

Our thanks go out to Jerry Cammarata and the North Boulevard staff and students for hosting this program and exhibiting the school's character journey for all to experience.

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