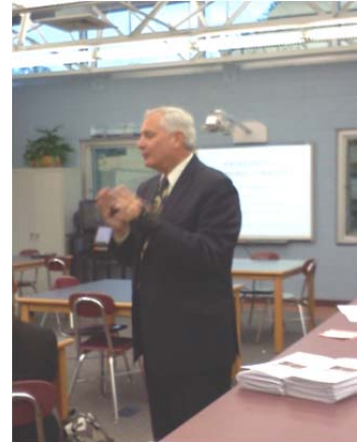


Southern Region Networking Center of the NJASECD - October 9, 2012 Meeting

Professional Conversations

On October 9, 2012, the NJASECD Southern Regional Networking Center held its first meeting at Rosa International Middle School, a 2009 National School of Character and a 2010 National Blue Ribbon School.

Ed Canzanese, the principal of Rosa International Middle School discussed the primary importance of creating systems to build and sustain character development within one's school, and shared the systems and structures that were put into place as his school was opened in 1999. This approach allows the culture to be maintained even after key leaders have moved on. He stressed the importance of revisiting these systems and structures on a regular basis. Mr. Canzanes highlighted how social, emotional and character development along with the rigorous curriculum of the International Baccalaureate Middle Years program and adopting the Middle School Years Best Practices worked together harmoniously to create the high expectations and positive climate present at the school. This combination has brought Rosa standardized test scores in all subjects above the 90 percentile.



After refreshments, Principal Eloisa DeJesus-Woodruff and teachers from Richard Stockton Elementary School, Cherry Hill, NJ, a 2012 National School of Character engaged attendees in professional conversations about how to build a character initiative within a school stressing the fact that each school has to determine core values and assess progress via surveys, conversations and feedback. Acting on the results, you can determine next steps to make your character initiative stronger.



Stockton very effectively used a "School Leadership Council" as the vehicle thru which to begin and sustain this transformation.

Following the presentations, Mona Noyes, Coordinator of the SRNC led a discussion about next steps for the Region. Many pointed out the problem of getting to meetings because many areas of our region are several hours apart. The possibility of setting up meetings in other sections of the region was suggested, and as our capacity builds, we will consider this idea.

Our next in-person meeting will be held in January 2013. We will focus on Assessment and how to set up systems to collect information and "reality check" how your initiatives are being received and incorporated into the lives and actions of young people and your school community.

In addition, we are planning to expand our network via linking interested participants with one another. South Jersey has an abundance of talented character educators, all of whom have shown great willingness to mentor and help whenever asked. We will be e-mailing more information about this plan in the coming weeks.