



**EIGHTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**CHARACTER: A MUST for Everyone, Everywhere:  
In Academics, Athletics, and the Arts**

**Recognition of 2015 New Jersey Schools of Character**



**May 29, 2015  
Rider University  
Lawrenceville, New Jersey**

**character.org**



**CHARACTER: A MUST for Everyone, Everywhere  
In Academics, Athletics, and the Arts!**

**CONFERENCE SCHEDULE**

- 7:30-8:15 REGISTRATION AND REFRESHMENTS**  
Fine Arts Building, Yvonne Theater Lobby
- 8:30-9:30 RECOGNITION PROGRAM**  
**2015 NEW JERSEY SCHOOLS OF CHARACTER**  
Yvonne Theater
- 9:30-9:45 INTRODUCTIONS AND BUSINESS MEETING**  
NJASECD Board of Trustees – Yvonne Theater
- 9:45-10:15 KEYNOTE PANEL / Q&A**  
Academics, Athletics, and the Arts  
Dr. Michael Gilbert, Ed Canzanese, & James Sarto  
Eileen Dachnowicz, Moderator  
Yvonne Theater
- 10:30-11:30 BREAKOUT SESSION 1 - Various Presenters**  
North Hall Classrooms (See schedule following)
- 11:45-12:45 LUNCH**  
Bart Ludeke Student Center
- 12:00-12:45 PROMISING PRACTICE POSTER DISPLAY**  
Bart Ludeke Student Center Hallway
- 1:00-2:00 BREAKOUT SESSION 2 – Various Presenters**  
North Hall Classrooms  
(See schedule following)
- 2:15-3:15 BREAKOUT SESSION 3 – Various Presenters**  
North Hall Classrooms  
(See schedule following)



## WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

### BREAKOUT SESSION 1 – 10:30-11:30 AM

### NORTH HALL

#### **Using a School Climate Approach to Include Students with Disabilities**

**Presenters:** Bradford C. Lerman, Psy.D., Virginia Stillson, Psy.D., and Millicent H. Kellner, Ph.D., LCSW, Center for Applied Psychology at Rutgers University

**Room 126, North Hall**

**Description:** Based on the Rutgers/NJDOE Inclusive Schools Climate Initiative (ISCI), this workshop introduces a school climate change process that participants can use as a model in their schools to promote the social, emotional, and character development of all students. Participants will learn the dimensions of school climate and explore a school climate approach that supports inclusion and disability awareness. Each participant will have an opportunity to engage in an activity to reflect on his/her own inclusive school climate as it relates to the 11 Principles of Character Education.

#### **Addressing School Climate to Ensure Student Academic and Emotional Success**

**Presenters:** Liz Warner, United Way of Northern NJ, and Dr. Trish Heindel, College of Saint Elizabeth

**Room 127, North Hall**

**Description:** The School Culture & Climate Initiative, a 2014 Promising Practice winner, provides schools with the means to address their culture & climate. The result is an environment where children can thrive emotionally, physically, & academically. Learn how a systemic, intentional approach & focus on social-emotional skills ensures sustainability & student success. We will provide support for the importance of strong social and emotional skills in increasing academic achievement, graduation rates and life success; provide examples of schools and districts who have addressed their culture and climate in a sustainable manner; demonstrate how any intervention (whether academics, arts or athletics) will have greater impact and be more cost effective if a school has a strong positive school culture and climate; and share the New Jersey Culture and Climate Guidelines for a Healthy School which provides a framework for school improvement.

#### **In This Together: Addressing Suicidal Ideation through Shared Responsibility**

**Presenters:** David Nash, Director of Legal One, at FEA and Maureen Brogan, Rutgers UBHC

**Room 129, North Hall**

**Description:** This session will equip participants to understand the complex link between suicide, bullying and other triggering events, and to address students who “fall through the cracks,” by providing tools for early identification/referral of students with mental health issues in order to reduce later suicide risk. The program will include a discussion of character and the importance of instilling a sense of shared responsibility and community in all students, so that students are willing to come forward to an adult when their peers are struggling with mental health issues and suicidal ideation. Participants will discuss real world scenarios that are included in a new online course, Signs Matter: Early Detection, a resource available to assist educators in addressing suicidal ideation, developing by LEGAL ONE, Rutgers University and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

#### **The Relationship Gap: What, Why, and Actions**

**Presenters:** Dr. Michael Gilbert, Keynote Panelist and NJ DOE Culture/Climate Specialist and Susette Jackson, Climate and Culture Leader at Joyce Kilmer Middle School in Trenton, NJ.

**Room 130, North Hall**

**Description:** Climate and culture survey data indicate trends consistent with lower

perceptions of positive relationships among students as compared to staff and parents. Relationship building is a component of character-building and transcends the school experiences of the students. What can we gain from information regarding stakeholder relationships and why do some students express a disconnect with our schools? This session will consider the benefits of strong relationships and actions we can take. This “Relationship Gap” will be explored through discussion of trust, academic support, clear student expectations, and healthy learning environments.

### **Character Education in an Urban Environment**

**Presenters:** Elizabeth McLaughlin, Teacher, and Cassandra Pestana, School Counselor, Juan Pablo Duarte – Jose Julian Marti, School No. 28, Elizabeth, NJ

**Room 205, North Hall**

**Description:** Juan Pablo Duarte – Jose Julian Marti, School No. 28 is located in the heart of the Port of Elizabeth, NJ. Our school is made up of a diverse population of students from all different walks of life. We have found what works best for our school is the way we bring character education to this unique population of students. Our presentation, “Character Education in an Urban Environment” will walk you through what works for our school and our students.

### **A Garden of Character**

**Presenters:** Laura Hoogstrate, Teacher, and Josephine Ramirez, Counselor, Theunis Dey Elementary School, Wayne, NJ

**Room 206, North Hall**

**Description:** During this multi-media presentation, we will demonstrate how our school community successfully weaves Social Emotional Character Development throughout all aspects of the school year through both curricular and extra curricular activities. We will trace our growth over the past several years and offer tips for schools beginning this process of integration.

### **Students Making Character Count Every Day**

**Presenters:** Amy Dickerson, Teacher, and Krista Provost, Teacher, Macopin Middle School, West Milford, NJ

**Room 207, North Hall**

**Description:** This workshop is designed for schools interested in developing a better selection of programs that facilitate giving every student a voice, fostering student leadership, and motivating students to lead in character education efforts to bring positive changes to the community. Our framework includes a student-elected Student Government (Student Council and Homeroom Representatives) that is the voice of Macopin and runs character-related activity nights; Kid Council, a student-administrator outreach group; peer mentoring and conflict resolution through the Macopin Mediators; as well as service and community action through the Make a Change Club. These groups involve everyone, everywhere in our school.

### **Developing Core Values and Incorporating Them into Classrooms, Sports, and the Arts**

**Presenters:** Dr. John Hourani, Assistant Principal, and Rachel Fieldman, Teacher, Camden County Technical Schools, Gloucester Township Campus

**Room 208, North Hall**

**Description:** This presentation will highlight the Gloucester Township Campus of Camden County Technical Schools’ journey to achieving NJSOC status. The presentation will include guidelines and ideas for forming a School of Character Committee, steps to creating core values (including the involvement of all stakeholders), obtaining teacher and student buy-in, implementing core value and character education lessons in the classroom, and infusing core values into sports, the arts, and after-school activities.



## WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

### BREAKOUT SESSION 2 - 1:00-2:00 PM

### NORTH HALL

#### **Tips on Applying for a New Jersey/National School of Character**

**Presenter:** Eileen Dachnowicz, Certified Trainer, Writer, Evaluator, Character.org  
**Room 126, North Hall**

**Description:** A seasoned National School of Character screener and evaluator will take you through the steps of applying for a New Jersey School of Character, the first step in becoming a National School of Character. You will get a quick review of the *Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education*, the criterion for judging, and many hints for showcasing your school/district to your best advantage.

#### **Becoming Credentialed in SECD Direct Instruction and School Leadership**

**Presenters:** Maurice J. Elias & Vicki Poedubicky, Rutgers University, and Patricia Heindel, College of Saint Elizabeth  
**Room 127, North Hall**

**Description:** SECD is becoming increasingly recognized as the missing piece in education and essential for success in academics, the arts, athletics, civics, and college and career. Your skills as a direct instructor of SECD (whether in classrooms, small groups, or after school contexts) or as a leader of SECD in your school (whether as an anti-bullying specialist or coordinator or leader or member of a character or culture and climate or school safety team or committee) deserves professional recognition for the added value your skills bring to your setting. College of St. Elizabeth and Rutgers University have collaborated to create an Academy for SEL in Schools (SELinSchools.org) offering courses leading to two certificates, one in Direct Instruction of SECD and one in School-Focused Coordination and Leadership of SECD and School Culture and Climate. This presentation will discuss the rationale for these certificates, the components essential for demonstrating competence in these areas, and the role of the Academy's virtual PLC in ongoing support and skill development in your SECD work.

#### **School Climate and Social-Emotional Learning**

**Presenter:** Kelly Allen, School Climate Specialist, NJDOE  
**Room 129, North Hall**

**Description:** This presentation will focus on the connection between social-emotional learning and the building of a positive school climate. Information will be provided on research-based social-emotional learning skills, dimensions of school climate, the correlation between a positive school climate and academic achievement as well as a reduction in at-risk behaviors. Additionally, the presentation will provide an understanding of ways to embed these skills in schools.

#### **Developing an Effective Character Program in Athletics**

**Presenter:** Ed Canzanese, Keynote Panelist and Coordinator of NJPSA Leaders to Leaders  
**Room 130, North Hall**

**Description:** Sports in our schools today are often seen as more than just the game on the field or court. They are opportunities to unite, energize, lead, and develop a sense of pride for the entire community. They also provide an opportunity to influence a culture of character for all involved in the program. This session will introduce the *Eleven Principles of Character Education* and help participants identify whether practices in their district are consistent with meaningful and appropriate academic behaviors. Participants will also explore core ethical values with moral and performance character traits, and study models

of successful athletic programs with defined core values. The session will also assist in developing a cultural framework to establish a foundation of character for your athletic program.

### **The Fish! Philosophy in Action in Old Bridge Township Public Schools**

**Presenter:** Christopher Burica, Teacher, William A. Miller Elementary School, Old Bridge, NJ

#### **Room 205, North Hall**

**Description:** Looking to the four foundational levels of the Fish Philosophy (Be There, Play, Make Their Day, and Choose Your Attitude), the Old Bridge Township Public School District has coordinated an effort to revitalize school spirit, atmosphere, and a positive attitude to nurture an academic and social environment that encourages cooperation and respect among peers and staff. Utilizing strategies to invoke feelings of warmth and acceptance, Old Bridge’s emphasis on Morning Meeting, Peaceful School Bus and the Bucket Filler program all complement one another to create a nuanced and all-encompassing Character Education curriculum that involves academics, athletics and the arts.

### **Spread the Word**

**Presenters:** Pat Carr, Character Ed Coordinator, and Rich Baran, School Psychologist, Oxford Central School

#### **Room 206, North Hall**

**Description:** How do you keep the momentum going? How do you keep things relevant? Developing strong values in our students is not about the prize or achieving success. It is all about the journey, the connections that form the bonds within the climate and culture of the school. While you may think that developing a strong character education program may be challenging, maintaining that program year after year puts true character to the test! Can your program pass the test of time? Oxford Central School began its character education journey over eight years ago. The C.O.R.R.E.C.T. program has become the foundation for all that we do at OCS. It defines who we are and who we hope to be. Learn how we are “keeping it real” and, most of all, learn how your program can “Spread the Word” throughout your community and beyond.

### **Keep Moving Forward: The UGL School Story**

**Presenters:** Mr. Dan Novak, Principal, and Mrs. Johanna Archer, Media Specialist, Upper Greenwood Lake Elementary School, West Milford, NJ

#### **Room 207, North Hall**

**Description:** At Upper Greenwood Lake School, we embrace a Code of Conduct, which serves as the foundation for our character education program. Our presentation will highlight how we infuse character education into daily lessons, as well as school-wide activities that unify us: our Music Video, Be a Buddy Play, Scooter Bowl, Student Council, and extracurricular clubs. The use of multimedia to promote character education will also be explored.

### **The Total Child: The Importance of Implementing Social Emotional Skills in All Aspects of the School Curriculum and How to Do it With Little to No Budget!**

**Presenters:** Amy Amiet, Patricia Burns, and Cynthia Westhead, Lawrence Township Public Schools.

#### **Room 208, North Hall**

**Description:** Educating the “total child” includes infusing social emotional learning into all aspects of the students’ day at school. Our workshop will discuss the importance of these skills, how to implement them into your classrooms and how to do it with little to no budget at all. We will discuss the positive outcomes that can happen for your students when you grow your program not only in your school but also across your district.



## **WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS**

### **BREAKOUT SESSION 3 - 2:15-3:15 PM**

### **NORTH HALL**

#### **School-Wide Service Learning**

**Presenters:** Kristen Martello, Assistant Principal, Kristina Weiss, Counselor, and Deb Mansis, Teacher, Berlin Community School, Berlin, N.J.

##### **Room 126, North Hall**

**Description:** Have you ever wondered how to get service learning established through your school? Wonder no more! In this workshop we will tell how we started a school-wide service learning project that soared past our expectations! Participants will gain an understanding of why service learning is a must for everyone and the simple steps to get started.

#### **Changing Culture in Athletics**

**Presenters:** Alyson Fisher, Director of Health, Physical Education and Athletics, and Ann Degennaro, SAC, Lawrence Twp High School.

##### **Room 127, North Hall**

**Description:** In this presentation, we will discuss how administrators and coaches can work together to help create an environment in athletics that builds character. Learn about how one's personality can affect one's coaching style and participate in an in-depth conversation about bullying and hazing and how it can be prevented in athletics through a comprehensive character ed program.

#### **Character Development with the Gibbsboro Super 7!**

**Presenters:** Teadora Lewis, ELA Teacher, and Jeff Galda, Social Studies Teacher, Gibbsboro School

##### **Room 129, North Hall**

**Description:** Join Gibbsboro School, a 2014-2018 National School of Character, to learn how character development has intentionally and proactively been integrated using our core values known as the Super 7. Beginning each day with a school pledge, having a school-wide monthly Character Rally, creating a caring school community with opportunities for moral action, fostering intrinsic motivation, and infusing character education within all curricular/extra-curricular areas are some ways Gibbsboro School promotes, reinforces, and celebrates the Super 7. With the Super 7 as our focus, instead of just talking about good character, we are acting out our good character.

#### **Character Development Through the Arts and Across the Curriculum**

**Presenter:** James Sarto, Principal, Benedictine Academy, Elizabeth, NJ

##### **Room 130, North Hall**

**Description:** The Arts are an essential component of all educational programs and should not be taken for granted. An equal balance of academics, arts, and athletics comprises a well-balanced education for the individual learner. This workshop will focus on integrating the arts across the curriculum, and they are not "optional electives," but a positive and productive necessity for every student.

#### **Our Character Education Journey – Southwood Elementary School**

**Presenter:** Kerryann Silvestri, School Counselor, Southwood Elementary School, Old Bridge, NJ

##### **Room 205, North Hall**

**Description:** Henry Ford said, "Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is a process. Working together is success." Our presentation will detail the CE journey of our "neighborhood" school and will highlight the programs and initiatives that have transformed our climate and culture. CE began as a compartmentalized initiative and has evolved into the saturation of CE in every aspect of school life. The programs that will be discussed in-

clude our “Sustainable Southwood” Service Learning initiative, our Six Pillars of Character, and the Kelso’s Choice Conflict Resolution Model. Our strong school/family/community partnership ensures the consistency necessary for lifelong character development.

### **Seeing the Need, Taking the Lead: Ways That Teachers Can Take the Lead in Character Ed**

**Presenters:** Lynda Colella, Guidance Counselor, and Kim Klein, Teacher, Cinnaminson Middle School

#### **Room 206, North Hall**

**Description:** Teachers have an important role in taking the lead in Character Education. Through an analysis of current successful character education initiatives and activities, we will offer ideas on how to encourage teachers to be leaders in character education to help set the tone for students and the community. Some of the topics will include charity luncheons, staff breakfasts, senior citizen community dinners, fundraiser ideas and much more!

### **A Focus on Family and Community Involvement**

**Presenters:** Jason Robbins, School Counselor, and Eugene Adi-Darko, Paraprofessional, Washington Elementary School, Roselle, NJ

#### **Room 207, North Hall**

**Description:** At WES, we strongly believe that it is important that families and community members play vital roles in the lives of our students and are valuable members of our school community. We strive to include them in as many ways as possible. Each month, WES hosts Family Nights that serve both as community-building experiences but also opportunities to reach the parents. Staff provides families with workshops and students with fun, educational activities. In addition, WES plans programs and assemblies throughout the year designed to include the family members and community members in the students’ education.

### **Service Learning - A Key Component of Character Education**

**Presenters:** Tom Gaglione, Service Learning Coordinator, and Beverly Hovanec, Teacher, Hanover Park High School, East Hanover, NJ

#### **Room 208, North Hall**

**Description:** Service learning is a tangible, viable way to integrate character education into the classroom. Service learning builds character, develops civic responsibility, increases student motivation, and aids learning by making connections outside the classroom. As a 2013 National School of Character, service learning is one of our strong points. Three of our service projects have won Promising Practice awards through Character.org. In this workshop we will provide a thorough description of service learning, and share our success and best practices in developing service-learning projects that connect to curriculum in a variety of subjects at the high school level.

## **NJASECD 2015 CONFERENCE COMMITTEE**

Dr. Nadia Ansary, Dr. Millicent Kellner, Leigh Cline, and Amy Amiet, Co-Chairs

Dr. Phil Brown ★ Peter Clark ★ Christine Corrison

Eileen Dachnowicz ★ Ted Frynkewicz ★ James Sarto

Cindy Westhead ★ Pat Will (EIRC Liaison)

Nina Kemps (NJSOC Coordinator) ★ Pat Womelsdorf (NJSOC Co-Chair)

Pat Carr (NJSOC Co-Chair) ★ Dr. William Trusheim (Program Design)

The **New Jersey Alliance for Social, Emotional, and Character Development** would like to thank all of the presenters who have made the 2015 Conference possible. Your expertise and dedication to improving the culture and climate of New Jersey schools and your willingness to share your experiences with colleagues and practitioners are truly appreciated!