



NINTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

BUILDING CHARACTER: Embracing ALL Students Academically, Socially, and Emotionally

**Recognition of 2016 New Jersey Schools of Character
and New Jersey's 2016 National Schools of Character**

Keynote Panel and Breakout Sessions

**May 20, 2016
Rider University
Lawrenceville, New Jersey**

character.org



**BUILDING CHARACTER:
Embracing ALL Students
Academically, Socially, and Emotionally!**

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 BREAK**
- 9:45-10:00 INTRODUCTIONS AND BUSINESS MEETING**
NJASECD Board of Trustees – Yvonne Theater
- 10:00-11:00 KEYNOTE PANEL / Q&A**
Dr. Brad Lerman, Dr. Nadia Ansary,
Sulisnet Jimenez & Patricia Fitzgerald
Eileen Dachnowicz, Moderator
Yvonne Theater
- 11:15-12:00 BREAKOUT SESSION 1 - Various Presenters**
Fine Arts Classrooms (See schedule following)
- 12:00-12:45 LUNCH**
Bart Ludeke Student Center
- 1:00-1:45 BREAKOUT SESSION 2 – Various Presenters**
Fine Arts Classrooms
(See schedule following)
- 2:00-2:45 BREAKOUT SESSION 3 – Various Presenters**
Fine Arts Classrooms
(See schedule following)

KEYNOTE PANELISTS

Dr. Brad Lerman – Special Ed Populations



Bradford C. Lerman, Psy.D., is the Director of the Inclusive Schools Climate Initiative (ISCI) at The Center for Applied Psychology, Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology, Rutgers University. His work focuses on improving the conditions for learning in schools, and through ISCI, consults as well as provides training and resources to promote and foster more inclusive, supportive, and safe school climates. His previous projects at Rutgers have included the evaluation of the NJ Partnerships in Character Education Grant, directing the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Project and directing the Bullying Prevention Institute. Brad was also appointed to the NJ Anti-Bullying Task Force by Governor Chris Christie which studied and made recommendations on the implementation of the NJ Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights legislation.

Dr. Nadia Ansary – Culturally Diverse Populations

Dr. Nadia Ansary received her B. A. in Psychology (and Biology) from Rutgers University and her Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University. Her background is in Developmental Psychopathology with a focus on risk and resilience among adolescent populations. Dr. Ansary joined the faculty in the Department of Psychology at Rider University in the fall of 2006. Dr. Ansary has several research interests exploring: 1) bullying and victimization, particularly with Muslim targets, 2) Muslim youth and young adult mental well-being and community-based outreach, and 3) the association between problem behaviors and achievement particularly focusing on affluent youth. Her research also includes a focus on cross-cultural issues including acculturative stress and family conflict. Dr. Ansary lives in New Jersey with her husband and two children.



Sulisnet Jimenez – ELL Populations and New Immigrants



Mrs. Sulisnet Jimenez is currently the principal of Juan Pablo Duarte - Jose Julian Marti School No. 28 in Elizabeth, New Jersey. Mrs. Jimenez was born in Colombia and moved to the United States with her family thirty years ago, where she learned English as a teenager. Mrs. Jimenez holds a bachelor's degree from Kean University and a master's degree from Scranton University. After working for the Developmental Learning Center in Mountainside, she got her first job in in Elizabeth in 1998 as a bilingual middle school teacher working with Port of Entry students. Prior to becoming a principal, she served as world language supervisor and assistant principal. Under her leadership,

School 28 has received several prestigious awards at the state and national level. Among them, National School of Character, New Jersey School of Character, and most recently Model School for the Bilingual Program for the State of New Jersey.

Patricia Fitzgerald – Non-Traditional Populations

Patricia Fitzgerald is currently serving as superintendent of the Camden County Technical Schools. She has worked in that district since 1986 and has served as a business ed teacher, department chairperson, district recruitment coordinator, assistant principal, and principal prior to becoming superintendent in 2013. Prior to coming to Camden County Technical Schools, she served as acquisitions editor for business/vocational education textbooks for John Wiley & Sons. Pat received her bachelor's and master's degrees in business education from Montclair State University. The Camden County Technical Schools have won many awards at the state and national level in recent years. Character.org has recognized both campuses of the Camden County Technical Schools (Pennsauken and Gloucester Township) as National Schools of Character in 2015.





WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

BREAKOUT SESSION 1 – 11:15 AM -12:00 PM

Fine Arts Classrooms

A School Climate Approach to Support the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities

Dr. Bradford C. Lerman, Director and Dr. Lori Guerriero, Manager, Training and Consultation, Rutgers ISCI Program, Rutgers Center for Applied Psychology

Level: ALL Session: 1 Room: 201

Description: Based on the work of the Inclusive Schools Climate Initiative (ISCI) at Rutgers University (a partnership with the Office of Special Education Programs at NJ Department of Education), this workshop introduces a school climate change process that participants can use as a model in their schools. Participants will learn the dimensions of an inclusive school climate and explore a school climate change model that promotes a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all students, with a focus on students with disabilities. Each participant will learn how to develop an inclusive school climate improvement plan by engaging in a step-by-step demonstration of the process in small work groups.

Marginalized and Misunderstood: Muslim Youth at the Fringes of the School Community

Dr. Nadia Ansary, Associate Professor, Rider University and Dr. Karen Haboush, Clinical Associate Professor, Rutgers University

Level: ALL Session: 1 Room: 205

Description: Though growing evidence documents the marginalization of Muslims in American society, ostracism of Muslim students in the school context is little studied. Actively helping Muslim youth move from the outskirts of the school community to become engaged participants at the center of school life is necessary for several reasons: (1) to optimize their academic and psychosocial wellbeing, and (2) to enhance the lives of other students by exposing them to a diversity of perspectives and experiences. This workshop will provide educators with an overview of this group and recommend strategies to promote integration, as well as an appreciation of Muslim students in the school environment.

Character-Based Learning in a Preschool Setting

Juliette Smith, Teacher and Carla Kokoszka, Teacher, School #51, Elizabeth, NJ

Level: Preschool Session: 1 Room: 261

Description: Our school prides itself on exhibiting a nurturing environment that is child-centered and developmentally appropriate. Our presentation will focus on how character-building is the foundation of our teaching and learning practices, where academic and social emotional

development are key to ensuring student success. We encourage every child to interact positively with their peers and teachers, while respecting the diverse cultures and learning abilities of others. Our school motto, “Friends Care, Friends Share,” instills a meaningful message that all young learners can embrace. Together with our community, we provide a learning experience where every child feels welcomed, loved, and academically challenged in their educational experience.

Giving Students Ownership of Your School - Inside and Out

Douglas Stech, School Counselor, Debra Jarvie, Teacher, and Brianna Orefice, Teacher, Woodmont School, Montville, NJ

Level: ES Session: 1 Room: 278

Description: Woodmont School’s beautification project has been a focal point of our character education work. We brought our entire school community together to physically change the appearance and feel of our building, both inside and out. We focused on student voice, inclusion of all students and parent support as the outcomes we wanted from this work. This brought about gardens that surround our school, beautiful murals and many other transformations – all with widespread student participation and parent support. Our interactive conference presentation will likewise allow participants to envision and discuss how they’d like to change their own schools.

Student Council of Character

Carlos Gramata, Principal and Lisa Bowe, School Counselor, Hillside Elementary School, Livingston, NJ

Level: ES Session: 1 Room: 280

Description: Our Student Council at Hillside Elementary School goes beyond the traditional model. Our Student Council coordinates activities such as food drives and collections, school spirit days, and fundraisers, and it also exemplifies our core values through monthly school-wide character education assemblies. Each assembly introduces the next character unit of study through student-generated presentations. Student Council encourages participation of the general student body in these assemblies by showcasing character work done by buddy classes. The assemblies foster school spirit, encourage student participation, and support student leadership. These assemblies empower our students and give them an opportunity to promote core values, define character comprehensively and help create a broader sense of school community

The Journey Never Ends: The Responsibilities of a National School of Character

Dr. John Cafagna, Principal and Theresa Wisniewski, Carusi Middle School, Cherry Hill, NJ

Level: MS Session: 1 Room: 301

Description: Many schools aspire to be recognized as a school of character at the state and national levels. Once you celebrate this earned recognition how do you continue to grow as an organization? We do not view the school of character recognition as a terminal goal, but a gateway to the next chapter of a school that sustains great practices and continues to grow. Carusi Middle School was recognized as a State School of Character in 2009, a National School of Character in 2011, and a State School of Character again in 2016. We will share our reflective process we used through changes in leadership to continue to be a school of character.

Ready, Set, Start: How to Kick Off the New School Year with Character!

Jeff Galda, Teacher and Theodora Lewis, Teacher, Gibbsboro School, Gibbsboro, NJ

Level: ES/MS Session: 1 Room:303

Description: When is the best time to embrace all students, parents, teachers and community members in the character ed initiative at your school? The beginning of the school year, of course! At Gibbsboro School, we begin the very first day of the school with a big “First Day” celebration that puts the emphasis on what’s most important to us - building character in our school! It’s a little thing that makes a huge difference.

Athletes Against Bullying

Jennifer DiStefano, Student Assistance Counselor, Sarah Cervo, Teacher, and Jason Speller, Teacher, Cherry Hill HS East, Cherry Hill, NJ

Level: HS Session: 1 Room: 307

Description: Athletes Against Bullying at Cherry Hill High School East educates the student athlete to prevent bullying on the school’s sports teams and to promote the anti-bullying message through out the school and the community.

Helpful Tips on Applying for a NJ/National School of Character

Eileen Dachnowicz, Trainer, Site Visitor, Writer, Character.org and NJASECD Trustee

Level: ALL Session: 1 Room: 339

Description: A seasoned NSOC 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.



WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

BREAKOUT SESSION 2 - 1:00-1:45 PM

Fine Arts Classrooms

The Other Side of the Report Card: Assessing Students' Social, Emotional, and Character Development

Dr. Maurice Elias, Director, Rutgers SECD Lab, Rutgers University
Psychology Department, Rutgers University

Level: ALL Session: 2 Room: 201

Description: Whatever gets measured gets attention and focus. Right now, there is no widespread, practical way for schools to assess children's social-emotional skills and character (SECD). Or is there? Student report cards contain "the other side," for comments about children's behavior, character, preparation, motivation, and more. Learn how to improve your comments section to incorporate SECD, whether your school has an SECD program in place or is planning one. Even if you don't change your report card, learn how to create a procedure for widespread, deep conversations in schools about SECD, transforming relationships between parents and teachers regarding how parents can assist at home with their children's education.

Character Education in an Urban Environment

Sulisnet Jimenez, Principal, Elizabeth McLaughlin, Teacher and Cassandra Pestana, School Counselor, School No. 28, Elizabeth, NJ

Level: ES/MS Session: 2 Room: 205

Description: Juan Pablo Duarte – Jose Julian Marti, School No. 28 is located in the heart of the Port of the 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 in the way of bringing character education to this unique population of students. Our presentation, "Character Education in an urban environment" will walk you through what works – academically, socially, and emotionally - for our school and our students.

How To Ensure A Sustainable Systematic Approach To Social-Emotional Learning And Character Development In Your School

Elizabeth Warner, Co-Director School Culture and Climate Initiative, United Way of Northern NJ and Dr. Patricia Heindel, Co-Director School Culture and Climate Initiative, College of Saint Elizabeth

Level: ALL Session: 2 Room: 261

Description: Schools that want children to succeed cannot afford to have jumbled schoolhouses with disconnected programs. Schools and districts must systematically attend to students' SEL and character development

as well as their academic and other competencies needed for young people's success in school and life. This is often difficult for schools to do on their own without guidance. This workshop will provide guidance on how to create the infra-structure within a school to support a sustainable systematic approach to SEL and character development and will also explore three interwoven initiatives that support SEL implementation and sustainability: the School Support Network; School Culture and Climate Initiative; and the Academy for Social-Emotional Learning in Schools.

Shining STARS Build Character

Tricia Graney, Teacher and Kristen Rosimini, Teacher, Maple Road School, West Milford, NJ

Level: ES Session: 2 Room: 278

Description: Are all of your students striving to achieve recognition for being good character kids? Come learn how to build character and recognize your students for doing the right thing, even when no one is looking. Maple Road School celebrates monthly character traits, participates in service learning projects, and teaches Full Values to promote good character to ALL students in an inclusive school environment. Join us to see how we recognize our students, honor our Shining STARS, and how you can, too!

Raising Awareness of Disabilities in the Inclusive Setting

Amy Amiet, Assistant Principal and Courtney Hoschek, Special Education Teacher, Lawrence Intermediate School, Lawrenceville, NJ

Level: ES/MS Session: 2 Room: 280

Description: Join us as we present an array of ideas to create an inclusive setting in your school. Positive activities that raise awareness and education of students' differing abilities and teaching tolerance are the key to embracing all students academically, socially and emotionally.

Clara Barton School's Journey in Becoming a State School of Character

Sean Sweeney, Principal and Diane Bonanno, School Counselor, Clara Barton Elementary School, Cherry Hill, NJ

Level: ES Session: 2 Room: 301

Description: The presentation will focus on the recent steps our school community took that helped us earn State School of Character recognition. We will highlight the implementation of our Bucket fillers program, the development of our school's WE ARE program, and our effective use of Responsive Classroom practices. We hope the presentation will provide other school's the chance to take proven practices we utilize and carry them forward into their own school communities.

Action Research in Motion

Kelly Sirna, Teacher, Linwood Middle School, North Brunswick, NJ
Level: MS Session: 2 Room: 303

Description: Action research is a helping tool that school systems can use to aide students with a wide spectrum of diverse needs. This course shows a way of creating an intervention and tracking method. If you are an individual who is looking for a tool for assisting and compiling data, interventions, and methodologies – this may be of benefit to you. Action research is a continual system that responds to student-centered needs and is a beneficial way to document progress and refining and review of those intervention strategies.

Character Education: What is It and How Can I Implement It in My Classroom?

Thomas Gaglione, Character Ed Coordinator and Sheryl Granet, Teacher, Hanover Park Regional High School, East Hanover, NJ
Level: HS Session: 2 Room: 307

Description: The benefits of character education are far reaching, from improved learning and discipline in the classroom, to transforming entire school climate and culture. This workshop will provide a detailed overview of character education. Components of character education will be outlined, resources will be highlighted, and ideas for incorporating character education in classroom will be discussed.

School Discipline: A Prosocial Perspective

Dr. Philip Brown, Senior Consultant, National School Climate Center and NJASECD Past President and Sandra L. Jacques, Esq., Supervisor of Legal Research, NJPSA
Level: ALL Session: 2 Room: 339

Description: Today, too much of disciplinary policy and practice is punitive, unhelpful and ‘feeds’ the high school to prison pipeline. This workshop will show how schools move away from a focus on control and obedience to student-centered concerns like belonging and autonomy. We will contrast traditional and pro-social discipline policies and practices and review the USDE Guiding Principles on School Discipline. Emphasis will be place on understanding 1) What science tells us about the biological and social roots of discipline and moral behavior; 2) What defines effective pro-social discipline program resources; and 3) The legal framework and necessity to embrace best practices and minimize legal liability.



WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

BREAKOUT SESSION 3 - 2:00-2:45 PM

Fine Arts Classrooms

Successful Character Education Programs Implemented by National Schools of Character

Patricia E. Fitzgerald, Superintendent, Camden County Tech, Bonnie S. Durante, Principal, Gloucester Township Tech, and Gregory J. Cappello, Principal, Camden Tech

Level: HS Session: 3 Room: 201

Description: An overview of the successful character education programs that contributed to the two campuses of Camden County Technical Schools becoming National Schools of Character will be presented. These successful programs have helped to build a culture of character in a way that includes all students, and they empower students to take control of their character education. In addition to providing programs during and after the school day, character education is integrated within the curricula. Sample programs and lesson plans will be shared during this workshop.

Establishing or Enhancing a Student Peer Mentoring Program

Christine Colonel, English Teacher and Daisy Rodriguez, Assistant Principal, North Plainfield HS, North Plainfield, NJ

Level: HS Session: 3 Room: 205

Description: A program that is unique and successful in the school and community is the Canuck Mentoring peer mediation program. This program has been running in our school for a multitude of years and is a testament to the commitment and compassion of NPHS students. The program centers around fostering a cohesive and engaged environment through the mentoring of underclassmen by upperclassmen. The concepts created in this program are implemented both in and out of class and are student facilitated. The presentation will cover the application process, selection process, implementation, and benefits. Student testimonials will be included as well as documents needed to begin the program in any setting.

Building Empathy Among Diverse Students Populations: Core Character Building Practices to Increase Understanding and Kindness Towards All.

Christa Tinari: SEL Consultant; Founder, PeacePraxis Educational Services

Level: ALL Session: 3 Room: 261

Description: If you have ever wondered how to get your students to be more understanding of one another's feelings and diverse experiences, this session is for you! This session will provide an overview of the latest research on empathy: what is empathy (both affective and cognitive), and how we ensure that students develop it? Participants will learn several

core character building practices and lessons, to be implemented in the classroom and school-wide, to increase understanding and kindness between students.

Implementing Social & Emotional Learning Throughout the Curriculum Utilizing Available Technologies

Jim Sarto, Principal, Benedictine Academy

Level: ALL Session: 3 Room: 278

Description: This presentation focuses on implementing social and emotional learning throughout the curriculum utilizing available technologies. Emphasis will be placed strategies for including all staff members with on-going professional development. Sample hands-on equipment will be available. Please bring a laptop, iPad, and/or Smartphone to this presentation.

Building a School Around the 11 Principles: A Blueprint for Success

Dr. Kirk M. Rickansrud, Principal, Thomas Paine Elementary School, Cherry Hill, NJ

Level: ES Session: 3 Room: 280

Description: This presentation will walk leaders through the 11 Principles – a blueprint for creating a State and Nationally recognized school that is academically, socially, and emotionally character focused on school culture. Dr. Rickansrud has led two different schools in Cherry Hill to be National Schools of Character.

Our Character Journey

Dr. Anthony Arico, Principal and Maureen McKiernan, Teacher, Virgil Grissom Elementary School, Old Bridge, NJ

Level: ES Session: 3 Room: 301

Description: We will discuss our journey and the lessons our journey taught us on our way from an Emerging School of Character to a State School of Character. What surprised us is that our concept of what it means to be a School of Character changed dramatically over the years. Also, we will share how following the suggestions given by the NJ School of Character evaluators and Character.org helped us to enhance our program.

Practical Anti-bullying Strategies and Skills for Students

Mike Mancino, Math Teacher, Arthur L Johnson HS, Clark and Christina Mancino, Educational Consultant, WTC/Warren.

Level: HS Session: 3 Room: 303

Description: Help your students learn how they can embody heroic character and take a stand against bullying, through the use of practical strategies. By coaching kids to be “Better Than That™” - better than bad choices, including bullying, your students will choose to be kind and heroic during the times when it counts the most. The strategies taught will become part of your students’ daily thoughts and actions. They will enable your students to make connections, practice skills, and implement

the strategies needed to be a positive force in their communities. The strategies allow students to understand that it's cool to be inclusive, tolerant, and socially responsible.

Connected Staff = Connected Students

Barbara Caruso, Teacher and Jeff McGrail, Teacher, Berlin Boro Schools, Berlin, NJ

Level: ES/MS Session: 3 Room: 307

Description: School culture begins with a foundation built by a caring staff; a community of learners who are passionate about the interests and well-being of all students and fellow colleagues. Our school encourages all students to discover their potential with support from staff members who embrace each other's potential. Staff connections are fostered through daily and monthly celebrations of character, and at in-service meetings that focus on character education and development. Assemblies, team-building activities, school themed jeans/t-shirt days, community service opportunities, and staff nights-out form a strong positive bond throughout our staff. In turn, these staff connections enrich staff-student connections in school and within the community.

It's All about the Journey!

Patricia Carr, Character Ed Coordinator, Oxford Central School, Oxford, NJ

Level: ES/MS Session: 3 Room: 339

Description: As the climate and culture of a school/district are not static, neither must be the approach taken to insure sustainability. Matters of developing "good kids" and not just "smart kids" must be receptive to change. As our world is ever-changing and our students growing and maturing, so must the programs we structure to not only add another academic layer to their education, but an increased understanding of the importance of having good character. Learn about how Oxford Central School's (National School of Character) program continues to evolve to meet the needs of the students and staff while addressing the current educational process. How "good" will your program be going forward?

NJASECD 2016 CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Dr. Millicent Kellner, Leigh Cline, and Dr. William Trusheim, Co-Chairs

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The **New Jersey Alliance for Social, Emotional, and Character Development** would like to thank all of the presenters who have made the 2016 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!