



TENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

CHARACTER IS FOREVER: Building Your Program to Last!



**Recognition of 2017 New Jersey Schools of Character
and New Jersey's 2017 National Schools of Character
Keynote Panel and Breakout Sessions**

**May 19, 2017
Rider University
Lawrenceville, New Jersey**



**CHARACTER IS FOREVER:
Building Your Program to Last!**

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

- 7:30-8:15** REGISTRATION AND REFRESHMENTS
Fine Arts Building, Yvonne Theater Lobby
- 8:15-9:30** RECOGNITION PROGRAM
2017 SCHOOLS OF CHARACTER
Yvonne Theater
- 9:45-10:00** INTRODUCTIONS AND BUSINESS MEETING
NJASECD Board of Trustees – Yvonne Theater
- 10:00-11:00** KEYNOTE PANEL / Q&A
Thomas Santo, Mary Reinhold, and
Christopher Kelly
Eileen Dachnowicz, Moderator
Yvonne Theater
- 11:15-12:00** BREAKOUT SESSION 1 - Presentations
Fine Arts Classrooms
(See schedule following)
- 12:00-12:45** LUNCH
Bart Ludeke Student Center
- 1:00-1:45** BREAKOUT SESSION 2 – Presentations
Fine Arts Classrooms
(See schedule following)
- 2:00-2:45** BREAKOUT SESSION 3 – Presentations
Fine Arts Classrooms
(See schedule following)

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

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

Fine Arts Classrooms



SESSION 1, ROOM 201

Keynote Panel Follow-Up: Sustainability and Growth as a School of Character (ES)

Presenter: Laurie Ann Coletti, Principal

Affiliation: James McDivitt Elementary School, Old Bridge, NJ

Description: Congratulations! Deciding to incorporate character and social, emotional learning into your school culture is an admirable step. Building sustainability and growth at your school will ensure these values are supported and continued for years to come. How can a school maintain a strong level of commitment to character development, social learning, and emotional growth? This session will be an opportunity to learn, discuss and share strategies for sustaining a positive school culture.

SESSION 1, ROOM 205

From Beginning to End and More (ES)

Presenters: Dr. Cathy Lundquist and Trudy Coppola, Teachers, and Heather Praml, Guidance Counselor

Affiliation: Cedar Hill Elementary School, Montville Twp.NJ

Description: Three presenters will take the audience through the evolution of a character education program from 1998 to the present. The teachers' lens will describe the development, nourishing, and maintenance of the program; the school counselor will provide the effect of character education on students in both learning and discipline, and fifth grade character education students will demonstrate a roundtable discussion on respect. A question and answer segment will follow.

SESSION 1, ROOM 278

Celebrate Character (MS)

Presenter: Laurianne Brunetti Kuipers, Character Education Coordinator

Affiliation: Memorial Middle School, Fair Lawn, NJ

Description: Character educators are constant travelers on a journey which is oftentimes tumultuous before it is triumphant. This presentation is designed to serve as a compass as we reflect upon the efforts of our school (a National School of Character) in creating lessons, coordinating programs, choosing curriculum, communicating with students and colleagues, continuing to grow, considering where we stand, and cherishing the opportunity to make the most out of every "teachable moment" even in the most trying times.

SESSION 1, ROOM 280

A Data-driven Approach to Sustainable School Climate Improvement (ALL)

Presenters: Dr. Lori Guerriero and Alicia Raia-Hawrylak, Managers, Consultation and Training

Affiliation: Center for Applied Psychology, Rutgers University

Description: This workshop will introduce participants to a process for promoting positive school climate that has been developed by the School Climate Transformation Project (SCTP), an initiative supporting schools in utilizing school climate data from the New Jersey School Climate Survey (NJSCS) to inform improvement planning. Participants will learn strategies for school climate improvement and engage in an activity to build an understanding of connections between the NJSCS and actual strategies to build character.

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS (Continued)

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

Fine Arts Classrooms



SESSION 1, ROOM 301

Getting Students Involved and Having Them Lead the Way (ES)

Presenters: Jennifer Miller, Principal, and Shannon Ricker, Teacher/Advisor

Affiliation: Paradise Knoll Elementary School, West Milford, NJ

Description: Looking for a way to add zest to teaching character and to enliven assemblies? Paradise Knoll's Character Ambassadors, 5th and 6th grade students chosen for good character and merit, create and facilitate the school's monthly Spirit Assemblies that showcase students who have gone "above and beyond" as well as teach the following month's character trait. This workshop will help you create your own similar group that will make character more enjoyable and "kid friendly."

SESSION 1, ROOM 303

How To Ensure A Sustainable Systematic Approach To Social-Emotional Learning (ALL)

Presenters: Elizabeth Warner and Dr. Patricia Heindel, Co-Directors

Affiliation: School Culture and Climate Initiative, United Way of Northern NJ and College of Saint Elizabeth

Description: Schools that want children to succeed and develop character and social-emotional skills will be more successful if they have a wider community of support in these efforts. The presenters will share their experiences in creating a strong infra-structure to support a sustainable approach to SEL and character development and will explore three interwoven initiatives that aid SEL implementation and sustainability without significant financial investment: the School Support Network; School Culture and Climate Initiative; and the Academy for Social-Emotional Learning in Schools.

SESSION 1, ROOM 307

Toms River High School East Character Club (HS)

Presenters: Dennis Weidenbush, Adviser, Drew Uguro and Mike Bonafide, Student Leaders

Affiliation: Toms River High School East, Toms River, NJ

Description: The student president and vice-president will speak about starting a Character Club at Toms River High School East, its purpose, functioning and importance to the school's character program. They will speak about how the student component is essential to the overall success of the school's character education program. The club's mission is to enhance the school's culture and atmosphere by modeling and encouraging student behavior consistent with the 11 Principles of Effective Character Education.

SESSION 1, ROOM 339

Tips on Applying for a NJ, National School of Character (ALL)

Presenter: Eileen Dachnowicz, Senior Consultant, National Trainer and Evaluator

Affiliation: Character.org and NJASECD

Description: Feeling overwhelmed in applying to become a NJ School of Character? A seasoned national evaluator will ease your fears as she takes you through the process. Not only will you get a lively review of the Eleven Principles and many helpful hints for applying, but also you'll go home with some new practices to use in enhancing your program.

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

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

Fine Arts Classrooms



SESSION 2, ROOM 201

Keynote Panel Follow-Up: ...And the Beat Goes On! (MS)

Presenters: Mary Reinhold, Retired Principal and Marc Citro, Principal

Affiliation: Macopin Middle School, West Milford, NJ

Description: Hear concrete examples from Macopin Middle School's character journey including multiple programs that have been recognized as Promising Practices that helped the school become a National School of Character. We will focus on how to get staff to buy into the process, scheduling concerns, community outreach, and building a sense of community within the school. We will explain the impact of retirements and the steps we have taken in this changing environment to sustain and improve the programs that have taken us to national recognition.

SESSION 2, ROOM 205

School Safety Teams: The Law and School Climate (ALL)

Presenter: Sandra L. Jacques, Esq, Supervisor of Legal Research & Content Development

Affiliation: LEGAL-ONE, NJPSA/FEA, Monroe, NJ

Description: In accordance with New Jersey's Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights, all public school districts in New Jersey are required to have a School Safety Team. The information that the School Safety Team amasses and scrutinizes can be utilized in a proactive manner by school districts in building and maintaining strong character among its students, and by instituting a positive school culture. This session will discuss how a school district can satisfy its legal requirements while simultaneously advancing the development of character among its staff and students.

SESSION 2, ROOM 278

#BeAPal (ES)

Presenters: Kerry Quinn, Principal, and Laura Gorcica, Guidance Counselor

Affiliation: Frank J. Smith Elementary School, East Hanover, NJ

Description: "Students Helping Students" is the mantra for the #BeAPal Club that partners second-grade general education students with younger peers in a self-contained program. The older buddies support their younger friends in a special physical education period as well as in friendship groups. A larger group of second graders, paired with younger students on the Spirit Team, collaborate on activities such as STEM projects and character education lessons.

SESSION 2, ROOM 280

Energizing the Growth Mindset: Developing 21st Century Skills (ES)

Presenters: Linda Patterson, Teacher, and Paula Pennington, Literacy Coach

Affiliation: A. Russell Knight Elementary School, Cherry Hill, NJ

Description: Discover how to strengthen school character and students' interpersonal skills by creating a growth mindset. A growth mindset involves taking risks, confronting challenges, and developing "work-effort" stamina. Learn ways to spur innovative thinking to develop 21st century skills, and its application for enhancing student success.

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS (Continued)

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

Fine Arts Classrooms



SESSION 2, ROOM 301

Little House Lessons: 80 Years and Going Strong (ES)

Presenters: Dr. Ann T. DeRosa, Principal, Debbie DeBaro, Guidance Counselor, Anthony Tumulo, Teacher, and Alissa Sider, Teacher

Affiliation: Whitehouse School, Whitehouse Station, NJ

Description: Do you have an interest in getting everyone involved in crafting uplifting cross-curricular experiences for your students? See how one elementary school approaches annual school-wide thematic units. For the last 12 years, the staff finds purpose and bonds through pursuing a common goal. Have some fun with a blast from the past and see how you can apply some of tips to a theme that brings everyone together in your grade level, building, and/or school community!

SESSION 2, ROOM 303

Character Education: Working on Building Citizens of Tomorrow (ALL)

Presenters: Mona Noyes, Erin Plummer, Kareem Agostini, and Barbara Wilson

Affiliation: Cherry Hill Public Schools, Cherry Hill, NJ

Description: Parents and educators at all levels have the responsibility and privilege of preparing students to become active, knowledgeable future citizens. We have a limited time to instill the components of civic virtue in our young people as we help them become well educated, ethical, and compassionate. Come and learn how Cherry Hill Zone PTA has had a vital role in starting and sustaining the central focus of character education in our academic program. Our district has infused core values of respect, responsibility, and American citizenship into all areas; we are building the citizens of tomorrow every day in our schools.

SESSION 2, ROOM 307

Keeping it “REAL”! (ES/MS)

Presenter: Patricia Carr, C.O.R.R.E.C.T. Coordinator

Affiliation: Oxford Central School, Oxford, NJ

Description: How will we keep our program on target? How do we maintain interest and enthusiasm? While creating a successful program is daunting, keeping that program dynamic and sustainable is an important task. The journey isn't over when the “National School of Character” banner hangs on the wall. Oxford Central School's homegrown C.O.R.R.E.C.T. program, recipient of nine Promising Practice awards and featured on NJEA's “Classroom Close-up,” keeps it “real” by anchoring its core values to all school activities and classroom lessons.

SESSION 2, ROOM 339

“We did a kindness campaign, so how come the kids are still being mean?” (ALL)

Presenter: Christa Tinari, CEO

Affiliation: PeacePraxis

Description: Are you disappointed in the short-lived impacts of your kindness campaign? Or perhaps you're considering celebrating kindness week through a poster context or assembly? This workshop will present research-based strategies for making sure that your efforts lead to lasting change. The presenter will outline reasons kindness campaigns fall short of expectations and explain what to do about it. Participants will come away with strategies for encouraging kindness on a daily basis, and (most especially) how kids can be kind in challenging situations.

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

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

Fine Arts Classrooms



SESSION 3, ROOM 201

Keynote Panel Follow-Up: Character Education – A Principal’s Perspective (HS)

Presenter: Christopher N. Kelly, Principal

Affiliation: Whippany Park High School, East Hanover, NJ

Description: Soon after incorporating service learning and character education into our schools on all levels, our district was honored by the Character Education Partnership of Washington D.C. as New Jersey’s first National District of Character. Our focus on service learning and character education have dramatically improved the culture and climate of our schools by creating a place where students are more empathetic toward others and feel comfortable working toward their academic and extracurricular goals.

SESSION 3, ROOM 205

NJ DOE Update (ALL)

Presenters: Luiz Pereira and Kirsten Weigert

Affiliation: New Jersey State Department of Education, Trenton, NJ

Description: Success in today’s world requires youth who are prepared with the social and emotional skills to manage emotions, set goals, maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions. Representatives from the Department of Education will provide updates on the department’s work on SEL and will also share strategies teachers can use to integrate SEL into instruction.

SESSION 3, ROOM 278

Ritualizing Social and Emotional Learning Through Creative Expression (ALL)

Presenters: Michael Cruz, School Operations Manager and Caitlin Daly, Education Wellbeing Consultant

Affiliation: Speedway Academies, Newark, NJ and “Move This World”

Description: In this experiential and interactive session that draws on theories from expressive arts therapy, education professional Caitlin Daly will join Michael Cruz of Speedway Academies to explore the power of creativity in cultivating mindfulness, emotional wellbeing, and empathy. Learn how to use movement to identify and manage emotions, and examine the kinesthetic dimension of empathy in order to feel the physical state of another person with your own body!

SESSION 3, ROOM 280

Project Mindful (ES)

Presenters: Lisa Bowe, School Counselor, and Carlos Gramata, Principal

Affiliation: Hillside Elementary School, Livingston, NJ

Description: Personalization and a strong sense of belonging are two of the most prominent factors contributing to high student and staff achievement. Hillside School has created a program called Caring Communities in which small groups of students (K-5) and staff meet once a month and work cooperatively on activities that develop a greater sense of community across all grades. The presenters will share some interesting effects from this year’s focus on “Mindfulness.”

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS (Continued)

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

Fine Arts Classrooms



SESSION 3, ROOM 301

Improving School Climate Through School-wide Character Activities (MS)

Presenters: Melissa DeClementi, Beth Green, and Kim Klein, Teachers

Affiliation: Cinnaminson Middle School, Cinnaminson, NJ

Description: Come hear about our transformation from a “caring school” to being named a NJ State School of Character. Through programs such as Unity Day, Cereal for Pajamas, Random Acts Of Kindness Week, Pirate Hook Program, Soup-er Supper for Seniors, we have grown our program to involve our total school family. Our program has enhanced our school climate where character education is a common priority for all of our staff and students.

SESSION 3, ROOM 303

TITLE: Be Today’s Hero - Using District-wide Themes to Enhance Your Character Education Program (ALL)

Presenters: Jeannie Dexinger, Principal and Erika Inzano, School Counselor

Affiliation: Salt Brook ES, New Providence School District, New Providence, NJ

Description: This session will focus on how to utilize a district-wide character education program that is developmentally appropriate for all grade-levels and focuses on a yearly common unifying theme that helps students, staff, and community internalize the message of respect, kindness, and empathy for others. Learn how to develop and infuse a district-wide theme that is catchy, meaningful, and fun. Ideas are practical, sustainable, easy, and ready to be used. But, most importantly, the kids at all levels love them!

SESSION 3, ROOM 307

Bottom Up, Top Down, Middle Out: Routes to Building a School or District of Character (ALL)

Presenters: Mona Noyes, Dr. Kirk Rickansrud, Nina Kempes, and Tony Trongone

Affiliation: Cherry Hill Public Schools and Pemberton Public Schools

Description: Individuals or groups who are interested in developing their school or district into a place where character development is expected, taught, and recognized often aren’t sure how to begin or strengthen their journey. Come and learn how three different entry points led to the desired outcomes for three different school settings. We will be hearing from a superintendent who led two different districts, a principal who developed different grade level schools, and a PTA leader who started a program grassroots up.

SESSION 3, ROOM 339

Building Character in Troubled Times: NJ Schools of Character Who Think Outside the Box (ALL)

Presenters: Dr. William Trusheim, President, and Eileen Dachnowicz, Trustee.

Affiliation: NJ Alliance for Social, Emotional, and Character Development

Description: How do you provide the academic, social and emotional tools for students to thrive when you face formidable challenges? Learn how three schools are doing it! Educators from Roselle’s Harrison School, an urban 1-4 elementary school with a 95% poverty rate, North Plainfield’s Somerset Intermediate, a 5-6 school with an influx of non-English speaking students, and Burlington County Alternative High School, a 6-12 high school, whose students have not flourished in a traditional setting, will share their stories, trials and successes.