Character Council
of Greater Cincinnati & Northern Kentucky

"School of Character" Process
For Enhancing School Culture and Achievement

Character Education helps students reach their full capacity and provides them with a foundation for success. Through the program, students grow in qualities such as respect, attentiveness, responsibility, self-control, truthfulness and compassion. In turn they gain self-confidence, improve their relationships, work harder, and behave better.

Local educators and those in other parts of the country report fewer discipline problems and higher academic achievement as a result of the implementation of high-quality character education.

Why become a School of Character? The positive focus:

- assists administrators in establishing and implementing high standards,
- energizes teachers and provide them with tools for building character,
- brings out the best in students by building on their strengths,
- has a positive affect on behavior and achievement.

"School of Character" Commitments

The commitments of a school or school district to be recognized as a "School of Character" by the Character Council of Greater Cincinnati & Northern Kentucky are twofold:

I.   **Commitments of leaders/staff to champion character building in themselves, their students, and their students' families.**

II.   **Implementation Steps designed to help carry out the objective of "Creating a Culture of Character" within each school/district.**

√   **Commitment from the leader** (Superintendent for District or Principal for School) to champion monthly character development within their jurisdiction by modeling and practicing themselves and setting up an accountability system (ex. Committees within schools) to make sure that implementation is occurring.

√   **Personal Commitment from staff** (teachers, cafeteria, bus drivers, etc.) to personally practice the Character Qualities, for it is through their modeling it and engaging the students that change will occur.

√ **Classroom Commitment from staff** to creatively bring character into the classroom creating a "Culture of Character" by which the students live and work.

√ **Parent Involvement**: Commitment by the leader and staff to involve parents in the effort to encourage good character.

Implementation Steps

Initial

□ **Resolution:** Once a school/district has set forth the commitments, they will pass a resolution through their board to formalize their commitment as a "School of Character." The resolution states the schools intention to promote and encourage good character.

√ **Plan:** Create a School of Character" plan (white paper) to be posted on school and Character Council websites and to be included in school handbook.

□ **Kick-off**: Announce the "School of Character" initiative to faculty by inviting the Character Council to present a "Character... It Starts with Me: Building a Foundation for Success" workshop during in-service.

√ **A character committee** or champion will be established within the school to lead the effort and report progress to the superintendent/principal.

√ **Establish baseline** to measure the effectiveness of the initiative.

√ **Parents** will be informed through a newsletter of the "School of Character" commitment and invited to participate and work with staff.

□ **Distribute Character First materials**: Achieving True Success books or Pocket Guides to each employee.

□ **Incorporate character into human resources practices**, including character-based hiring, evaluation, and recognition.

Ongoing Steps: (One or more each month)

√ **Professional development** and/or staff meetings will include a discussion and reflection of the Character Quality of the Month. Ideas for discussion:
   a. Definition
   b. Applicability to their own lives and to their students' lives
   c. Benefits of developing the quality
   d. Testimonies by individuals of what the quality means to them
   e. Brainstorming on how to creatively implement change with the quality

√ **Monthly bulletins**: Character committee will distribute the character quality of the month bulletin to staff each month to promote classroom activities. Staff will make an effort to incorporate character activities and lessons into the classroom daily or weekly. Staff is encouraged to brainstorm and share in staff meetings effective classroom methods for encouraging good character in their classrooms.

√ **Recognition**: Establish a system of recognizing students for character, both in the classroom or at an assembly. (Both verbal recognition and certificates are powerful methods and entice other students and the whole school to follow the example.)

√ **Audio/visual display**: Schools will display audio/visually the Character Quality of the Month in order to keep it fresh in the minds/hearts of the staff and students. The following are ideas, some of which can be written or designed by students:

- Posters (available from Character First)	- T-shirts
- Creative Artwork done by students	- Display cases
- Marquees	- Buttons
- Announcements	- Homeroom
- Skits	- Flyers/Memos
- Student Guides from Character First	

☐ **Purchase Character First** (or other) **curriculum** and resources for teachers that parallel the character quality of the month. The materials provide concepts and activities to help implement character in the classroom and are described at www.characterfirst.com.

√ **Assessment and Accountability:** Set up a semi-annual report system including:
   a. Summary by the internal committee
   b. List of activities that were used to implement the Character Qualities
   c. Measurable results, positive changes that are reported, what worked and what did not.
   d. Possibly, a list of all staff and students who were recognized for the Character Qualities

☐ **Involve the community** by encouraging local businesses and government agencies to support school efforts and commit individually to a character focus.

(√ indicates mandatory steps to be listed as a "School of Character" on the Character Council website)

Note: The Character Quality of the Month mentioned above can be substituted for whatever curricula and frequency is being implemented by the organization. (Ex. Character Counts, Citizenship programs, weekly, bimonthly, quarterly, etc.)