

State Schools of Character: **Building Local Networks of Successful Schools**

With major changes to the program in 2011 that allow *all* schools and districts that meet the standard of excellence outlined in the Character Education Partnership's *11 Principles of Effective Character Education* to be named State and National Schools of Character, state-level networks of schools helping schools continue to expand.

State Schools of Character (SSOC) sponsors encourage schools in their states to enter the schools of character process and submit an SSOC/NSOC application for feedback and possible recognition. State coordinators in many states offer workshops on the application process and the 11 Principles and assist schools by offering resources, answering questions, providing technical assistance, and connecting schools with one another. Building state-level networks of schools of character and educators who become experts in the 11 Principles has enabled the program to expand and has enhanced the overall quality of character education in schools, especially in very active states.

State coordinators and their teams of reviewers receive and review the applications from schools and districts in their states. They provide feedback to applicants and select State Schools of Character, sending these applications to Character Education Partnership (CEP) for consideration on the national level. For schools or districts from participating states, becoming an SSOC is a prerequisite to becoming a National School (or District) of Character. Once designated as SSOC,

a title they hold for 3 years, schools and districts serve as models within their states, where they share best practices and develop state-level mentoring networks by hosting visitors at their sites and presenting at workshops and conferences.

State sponsors recognize their SSOC in awards ceremonies and celebrations. In the spring, for example, Missouri sponsor Characterplus presented each Missouri SSOC with a banner at a school assembly. They then honored all the SSOC and NSOC from Missouri at a luncheon held at their annual conference in June. CEP's Chairman Emeritus Sandy McDonnell and Kevin Demoff of the NFL Rams presented the awards, and several local legislators offered resolutions and proclamations in their honor. Following the awards ceremony, SSOC led breakout sessions for participants during which they shared best practices. According to Missouri SSOC Coordinator Suzy Ward, "The Missouri State Schools of Character stressed to others that it is not about winning but [about] going through the process of the 11 Principles to improve your school and students' lives." Similarly, state sponsors in states such as Pennsylvania and North



CEP Board Chairman Emeritus Sanford "Sandy" McDonnell honors the Missouri State and National Schools of Character at Characterplus' annual conference.

Carolina visited their SSOC individually to present banners so that members of each school community could be part of the celebration. Others, such as California, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, and Utah, held awards ceremonies that often included other awards, such as Promising Practices, or were part of conferences where attendees could learn more from the schools being recognized.

State Sponsors Named 73 State Schools of Character in 2011

In 2011, state sponsors named a total of 73 State Schools of Character. Forty-two of these were subsequently named NSOC. Notably, all but two of the 2011 NSOC and National Finalists are from SSOC states, reflecting the level of activity, resources, and leadership in character education in states with sponsors. The states with organizations offering strong support experience the highest levels of participation in the program. Missouri, New Jersey, and South Carolina received applications in the double digits in 2011. These states continue to serve as models to guide the way for others. ▶

2011 State Schools of Character

CALIFORNIA

STATE SPONSOR:

University of San Diego
Character Development Center

Brentwood School*

Los Angeles, CA

Valley Preparatory Academy Charter School**

Fresno, California

COLORADO

STATE SPONSOR:

Foundation for
Character Development

Charles M. Russell Middle School of the Performing Arts and Science

Colorado Springs, CO
Colorado Springs School District 11

North Star Academy

Parker, CO
Douglas County School District

Rocky Heights Middle School

Littleton, CO
Douglas County School District



Laura Stahoski and Kelly Heard from Brentwood School display their SSOC banner awarded at the University of San Diego Character Development Center's conference.

FLORIDA

STATE SPONSOR:

The Golden Rule Foundation

Fuguitt Elementary School*

Largo, FL
Pinellas County Schools

Imagine Schools South Lake*

Clermont, FL
Lake County Schools

Oakhurst Elementary School*

Largo, FL
Pinellas County Schools

GEORGIA

STATE SPONSOR:

Pioneer RESA (Regional
Educational Service Agency)

Carmel Elementary School

Woodstock, GA
Cherokee County School District

ILLINOIS

2011 STATE SPONSOR:

University of Illinois Extension

Fox River Country Day School**

Elgin, IL

Renfro Elementary School*

Collinsville, IL
Collinsville Community Unit
School District 10

INDIANA

STATE SPONSOR:

Indiana Department
of Education

IOWA

STATE SPONSOR:

Character Counts in Iowa/
Institute for Character
Development at Drake University

KANSAS

STATE SPONSOR:

Kansas Department
of Education

Hesston Schools USD 460

Hesston, KS



SSOC Coordinators Millie Corder and Mary Lasris present the SSOC banner to staff and students at Carmel Elementary.

*2011 National School of Character

**2011 National Finalist



2011 State Schools of Character

“In my school visits this year, I was most inspired, actually, by a school that *didn’t* win. What inspired me most was witnessing the students’ engagement and ownership of what they were learning about character. The staff was receptive to the idea of creating a whole-school vision for character education, rather than using a hodgepodge of different ‘for-purchase’ programs, their current approach. They are on the cusp of true character education, and it’s just as exciting to witness this growth as it is to congratulate a ‘winner.’”

—Betsy Stecker, Michigan SSOC Coordinator

KENTUCKY

STATE SPONSOR:

Character Council of Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky

LOUISIANA

STATE SPONSOR:

LSU AgCenter 4-H Youth Development

MARYLAND

STATE SPONSOR:

Maryland Center for Character Education at Stevenson University; Maryland State Department of Education

Eva Turner Elementary School

Waldorf, MD
Charles County Public Schools

Oakwood Elementary School*

Glen Burnie, MD
Anne Arundel County Public Schools

Valley Elementary School

Jefferson, MD
Frederick County Public Schools

MASSACHUSETTS

STATE SPONSOR:

Hudson Public School District; Center for Character and Social Responsibility at Boston University

Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School*

Franklin, MA

MICHIGAN

STATE SPONSOR:

Michigan Department of Education

Bingham Farms Elementary School*

Bingham Farms, MI
Birmingham Public Schools

Derby Middle School

Birmingham, MI
Birmingham Public Schools

Pembroke Elementary School*

Troy, MI
Birmingham Public Schools

Pierce Elementary School*

Birmingham, MI
Birmingham Public Schools

Roosevelt Primary School*

Ferndale, MI
Ferndale Public Schools

MINNESOTA

STATE SPONSOR:

Synergy & Leadership Exchange; Minnesota Department of Education

Lakes International Language Academy**

Forest Lake, MN

MISSOURI

STATE SPONSOR:

CHARACTERplus; St. Louis Rams

Babler Elementary School*

Wildwood, MO
Rockwood School District

Bayless Elementary School*

St. Louis, MO
Bayless School District



Representatives of the 15 Missouri State Schools of Character that were named National Schools of Character, with Characterplus founder Sandy McDonnell.

*2011 National School of Character

**2011 National Finalist

Bowles Elementary School*

Fenton, MO
Rockwood School District

Branson Elementary West*

Branson, MO
Branson R-IV School District

Crestwood Elementary School*

Crestwood, MO
Lindbergh School District

Fox Middle School*

Arnold, MO
Fox C-6 School District

Geggie Elementary School*

Eureka, MO
Rockwood School District

George Guffey Elementary School*

Fenton, MO
Fox C-6 School District

Kellison Elementary School*

Fenton, MO
Rockwood School District

Lincoln Elementary School*

Troy, MO
Lincoln County R-III School District

Lindbergh High School*

St. Louis, MO
Lindbergh School District

Mark Twain Elementary School*

Brentwood, MO
Brentwood School District

Ross Elementary School

Creve Coeur, MO
Parkway C-2 School District



New Jersey state coordinators Nina Kemps and Rebecca Sapora-Day celebrate the accomplishments of all 25 SSOC applicants from their state at a recognition ceremony held at Rider University March 15, 2011.

Sherwood Elementary School

Arnold, MO
Fox C-6 School District

Spoede Elementary School

St. Louis, MO
Ladue School District

St. Louis Charter School*

St. Louis, MO

Trautwein Elementary School

St. Louis, MO
Mehlville School District

Uthoff Valley Elementary School*

Fenton, MO
Rockwood School District

Westridge Elementary School

Ballwin, MO
Rockwood School District

Woerther Elementary School*

Ballwin, MO
Rockwood School District

NEW HAMPSHIRE

STATE SPONSOR:

Ethics Institute at
Dartmouth College

NEW JERSEY

STATE SPONSOR:

New Jersey Alliance for Social,
Emotional and Character
Development (NJASECD)

Alan B. Shepard, Jr. Elementary School*

Old Bridge, NJ
Old Bridge Township Public Schools

Brigantine Elementary School*

Brigantine, NJ
Brigantine Public Schools

Eldridge Park Elementary School*

Lawrenceville, NJ
Lawrence Township Public Schools

Henry C. Beck Middle School

Cherry Hill, NJ
Cherry Hill Public Schools

John A. Carusi Middle School*

Cherry Hill, NJ
Cherry Hill Public Schools

Joseph J. Catena School*

Freehold, NJ
Freehold Township School District



The team from Kellison Elementary proudly display their SSOC award and state proclamation, with Kevin Demoff of the St. Louis Rams.



2011 State Schools of Character

“Missouri had the most 2011 SSOC and NSOC. This synergy is a result of dedicated educators who understand the importance of character education and the willingness to share best practices within their district and with others. Schools of character network and become models for others. They provide consultation, collaborations, workshops, field trips, and inspiration. Working together, they positively impact students, staff, and communities. Character education is changing the world—one heart at a time.”

—Suzy Ward, Missouri SSOC Coordinator

Lake Riviera Middle School*

Brick, NJ
Brick Township Public Schools

Liberty Corner School

Liberty Corner, NJ
Bernards Township School District

South Brunswick High School*

Monmouth Junction, NJ
South Brunswick School District

Lawrence Intermediate School

Lawrenceville, NJ
Lawrence Township Public Schools

Salt Brook Elementary School*

New Providence, NJ
New Providence School District

Interested in Becoming a State Sponsor?

Are you a possible state coordinator? Would your organization like to sponsor a State Schools of Character program in your state?

The kinds of organizations that sponsor the SSOC program vary from one state to another. The most common types of sponsoring organizations are:

- University departments of education, extension offices, or character development centers
- State departments of education
- Foundations with an interest in service, character, and youth development
- Regional character councils
- School districts with a strong history of character development
- Character education organizations and nonprofits

Sometimes several organizations will partner to sponsor the program. In other cases, networks of volunteers and educators create alliances that manage the program and support schools.

State coordinators serve as the point of contact for the sponsoring organization (or group of partner organizations) within each state. State sponsors receive modest start-up funds to begin their programs as well as ongoing training and resources from CEP.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Lara Maupin, *National Schools of Character Director*
Character Education Partnership

NEW YORK

STATE SPONSOR:

Academy for Character Education at The Sage Colleges

Chatham Middle School*

Chatham, NY
Chatham Central School District

Van Schaick Grade School

Cohoes, NY
Cohoes City School District

Walnut Street School*

Uniondale, NY
Uniondale School District

NORTH CAROLINA

STATE SPONSOR:

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

Cotswold Elementary School*

Charlotte, NC
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

OHIO

STATE SPONSOR:

Ohio Partners in Character Education; Ohio Department of Education; Ohio Better Business Bureaus

Hamilton City School District**

Hamilton, OH

Theodore Roosevelt High School**

Kent, OH
Kent City School District

2011 State Schools of Character



Blessed Sacrament is recognized as a Utah State School of Character at a ceremony held by Community of Caring at the University of Utah April 6, 2011.



Staff from Mountainville Academy display their Utah State School of Character banner.

OKLAHOMA

STATE SPONSOR:

Character Council
of Central Oklahoma

Muskogee High School*

Muskogee, OK
Muskogee Public Schools

PENNSYLVANIA

2011 STATE SPONSOR:

Center for Leadership and Ethics

2012 STATE SPONSOR:

DeSales University

Abington Junior High School

Abington, PA
Abington School District

Aston Elementary School

Aston, PA
Penn-Delco School District

First Philadelphia Paradigm Schools

Philadelphia, PA

Southern Middle School**

Sinking Spring, PA
Wilson School District

SOUTH CAROLINA

2011 STATE SPONSOR:

South Carolina Department
of Education

2012 STATE SPONSOR:

Palmetto Character Council

Bell's Crossing Elementary School*

Simpsonville, SC
Greenville County School District

Berkeley Elementary School

Moncks Corner, SC
Berkeley County School District

Doby's Mill Elementary School

Lugoff, SC
Kershaw County School District

Indian Land Middle School

Indian Land, SC
Lancaster County School District

TEXAS

STATE SPONSOR:

Texas Elementary Principals and
Supervisors Association (TEPSA)

Duncan Elementary School*

Fort Hood, TX
Killeen Independent School District

Fort Bend Independent School District*

Sugar Land, TX

UTAH

STATE SPONSOR:

Eunice Kennedy Shriver National
Center for Community of Caring
at the University of Utah

Blessed Sacrament Catholic School

Sandy, UT

Mountainville Academy

Alpine, UT

VIRGINIA

STATE SPONSOR:

School of Education,
Regent University

WASHINGTON

STATE SPONSOR:

Leadership Innovations
Team; Whitworth University;
Washington State Association
for Supervision and
Curriculum Development

WEST VIRGINIA

STATE SPONSOR:

College of Education
and Human Services,
Marshall University

Union Elementary School*

Buckhannon, WV
Upshur County Schools

WISCONSIN

STATE SPONSOR:

Wisconsin Character
Education Partnership

*2011 National School of Character

**2011 National Finalist