Caring Schools For All Symposium

May 25/26, 2009
Character Education and Social-Emotional Skills Development

1. Preamble

1.1 The Waterloo Region District School Board recognizes that the development of positive character traits and social/emotional skills is critical to the educational success of our children and the ultimate success of our community.

1.2 Although parents, primary caregivers and family have the primary responsibility for students’ character and social/emotional development, the Board, as a key player in the larger community, will play an important role in the development of positive character attributes and social-emotional skills.

1.3 All staff will be expected to play an active role through promoting, modeling and continuously encouraging the development of positive character attributes and social/emotional skills in everyday actions.

1.4 Teaching and administrative staff will be expected to explicitly teach, model and reinforce positive character attributes and social/emotional skills in all schools, JK-12.

1.5 Character Education and Social-Emotional Skills Development will be embedded in all curriculum.

1.6 Character Education and Social-Emotional Skills Development will be known as Imagine Tomorrow.
Character Education becomes Character Development
What does the Ministry have to say?

Character Development
The government will continue its focus on this key initiative, which directly relates to the Premier's commitment to support schools as agents of social cohesion that nurture students' academic, personal, and social development. The government has already made a strong start by working collaboratively with school boards across the province.

We need more than ever to look at the public education system as the primary tool we have to ensure that children are able to grow up to become citizens.

John Ralston Saul

The best work on character development integrates respect for diversity, citizenship development, personal and emotional intelligence, ethical behavior, and academic achievement. Personal and social development and academic achievement go hand in hand.

School staff have much to offer our students in this area. Parents, government, and community partners also have distinct roles. As well, Ontario’s students themselves can help to shape school culture. Our shared vision is to ensure that schools are safe, caring, and inclusive places where students and staff treat one another with respect and where students thrive.
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John Ralston Saul
The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat

Character Development Initiative

Parents, schools and communities share the responsibility for and the benefits of developing our young people as caring, empathetic and involved citizens. Character development affirms the importance of respect in Ontario schools and beyond.

Provincial Character Development Resource Teams

Eight character development resource teams have been established across the province. Five teams will support English public boards, one team will support English
Finding Common Ground:
Character Development in Ontario Schools, K–12

June 2008
What Is Character Development?

Character development is the deliberate effort to nurture the universal attributes upon which schools and communities find consensus. These attributes provide a standard for behaviour against which we hold ourselves accountable. They permeate all that happens in schools. They bind us together across the lines that often divide us in society. They form the basis of our relationships and of responsible citizenship. They are a foundation for excellence and equity in education, and for our vision of learning cultures and school communities that are respectful, safe, caring and inclusive.

Excellence in education includes character development. Through character, we find common ground.
What does WRDSB have to say?
SAFE SCHOOLS
- Restorative Justice;
- Bill 212;
- Bullying Prevention.

Chair:
Superintendent D. DeCoene

LEARNING SERVICES
- Learning to 18
- Special Education
- ESU/ELL

Chair:
Superintendent M. Harper

CARING & CONNECTING STEERING COMMITTEE
- Connect the work of the 4 sub-groups (ensure consistent messaging, alignment, avoidance of redundancy);
- Establish guiding principles
- Report to "Good Neighbors Committee.

Chair:
Executive Superintendent

EQUITY & INCLUSION
- Aboriginal Education;
- Equity Audit Recommendations;
- Equity & Inclusion Advisory Group.

Chair:
Executive Superintendent M.L. Mackie

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT
- "Heads, Hearts, Hands" initiative
- Imagine Tomorrow
- C3 Representatives
- Data Collection

Chair:
Superintendent M. Schinkel
Character Development

Character Development is an ongoing process of growth that intentionally models, teaches and inspires all people to want to do the right thing for the greater good of our whole community.

Character Development is the journey of connecting deep caring to knowing, feeling and doing.
Character Development Definition

Character Development is an ongoing process of growth that intentionally models, teaches and inspires all people to want to do the right thing for the greater good of our whole community.

Character Development is the journey of connecting deep caring to knowing, feeling and doing.
Head, Heart, Hands
Know    Feel    Do
What does a Character Development initiative look like?

- Professional Development
- Leadership
- Initiatives/Programs
- Peer Interaction strategies
- Explicit teaching of social-emotional skills and attributes
- Role Modeling by all staff
- Integration into the Core Academic curriculum
- Integration into all sectors of the organization
- Family/Community involvement
8 Character Attributes

The Process
Imagine Tomorrow
Community Consultation
Waterloo Inn
Fall 2006
Social Responsibility
Co-operation
Initiative
Integrity
Kindness
Respect
Empathy
Hope
8 Character Attributes

We can think of these attributes as the “language” of character ... or the delineation of those attributes that, taken together, form a picture of what “character looks like”. These are the attributes that will serve as a reference point for our system’s action plan.
Table Talk!

How has your school’s commitment to a holistic, integrated Character Development program influenced student learning, teacher instruction, school life?
Character Development Planning Framework

How do I know if my school is on-track?
The School Effectiveness Framework

A Collegial Process for Continuing Growth in the Effectiveness of Ontario Elementary Schools
The School Effectiveness Framework: A Collegial Process for Continued Growth in the Effectiveness of Ontario Elementary Schools
K – 12 School Effectiveness Framework

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Practices
- Instructional practices reflect a continuum of knowledge and skills that are innovative and progressive.
- All students are intellectually engaged in tasks which reflect high expectations for their learning.
- Student and teacher(s) share a common understanding of the learning goals and the criteria for success on the learning goals.
- Instruction is differentiated to take into account the background and experiences of all students and to meet their diverse interests, aptitudes and learning needs.
- There is a clear emphasis on high levels of literacy and numeracy achievement.
- Resources for students are relevant, current and inclusive.

Programs and Pathways
- The learning needs and interests of all students are reflected in coherent programs and pathways.
- Authentic experiences and experiential learning are built into all subject areas and programs.
- Students, parents and teachers know the full range of pathways and options and the relevant programs and supports that are available.
- Students have opportunities to build on in-school and out-of-school experiences, activities and personal interests to learn more about their potential.

Home, School and Community Partnerships
- The School Council has a meaningful role in supporting learning and achievement for all students.
- Strategies are in place to promote inclusiveness and to meet the needs of students from diverse communities.
- The school has an ongoing, effective communication strategy that engages parents, individuals, community groups and organizations.
- The school and community build partnerships to provide learning opportunities for students.

Assessment for, as and of Learning
- A variety of valid and reliable assessment data is collected and disaggregated and used to inform planning and instruction.
- Assessment tasks, aligned with the curriculum, are collaboratively developed by teachers and the resulting student performances analyzed to ensure consistency of standards.
- Students and teachers design and apply effective assessment strategies and tools to monitor learning and assess student progress.
- Descriptive feedback and ongoing communication are in place to allow students, teachers and parents to monitor student learning in a meaningful and timely manner.

Interventions and Closing the Gaps
- There is a culture of high expectations that supports the belief that all students can learn.
- There are shared and clearly understood processes and practices in place for monitoring, tracking and analyzing student data to improve student achievement.
- Timely and tiered interventions, supported by a team approach, respond to individual student learning needs.

School and Classroom Organization
- The organizational structures reflect and respond to the needs of all students.
- There are processes and practices in place to guide decision-making to implement and to support comprehensive programs.
- Teaching/learning time is optimized.
- Communication and procedures support student learning during all transitions.

Student Voice
- Students see themselves represented in the curriculum, programs and culture of their school.
- Students feel a sense of belonging in their classrooms and school and participate in decisions that impact their educational experience.
- Students are involved in building school culture.
School Effectiveness Framework

Effective schools …

• clearly articulate, model, teach and expect character attributes throughout the instructional day (Student Learning and Achievement 15)
• integrate and permeate Character Development throughout all school and classroom activities (Instructional Leadership 11)
• develop a set of attributes in collaboration with the community…. (School Culture 12)
• are inclusive and value diversity (Interpersonal Relationships 10)
• have students who see their school as safe and caring (Student Leadership and Engagement 1)
• actively engage students in all aspects of the Character Development Program (Student Leadership and Engagement 4)
• emphasize behaviours and actions that demonstrate the agreed upon Character Attributes (Student Leadership and Engagement 5)
Character Development Planning Framework

My School Inventory

The Ministry’s “School Effectiveness Framework” sets forth the following expectations of schools in an effort to support the Character Development of all members of school communities:

- The collaboratively developed character attributes are clearly articulated, modeled, taught and expected throughout the instructional day. Student Learning and Achievement 15

Do ALL staff understand their role and responsibility for modeling, teaching and infusing Character Development into all aspects of daily school life? (WRDSB interpretation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awareness</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Implementing</th>
<th>Sustaining</th>
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- Character Development is integrated and permeates school and classroom activities. Instructional Leadership 11

Do ALL staff understand that Character Development “is the curriculum”, not an “add-on”? Is there a focus on “Inspiring, knowing and doing” with respect to Character Development? In other words, is there a focus on both the explicit teaching of character and the modeling of character through orchestrated action? Is there an effort to see students know and want to do the good? (WRDSB interpretation)

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Table Talk!

- How could this tool support us as we develop a comprehensive plan for the integration of Character Development into school life?

- What challenges / opportunities do you anticipate in using this tool?
Next Steps
School leaders will:

1. Identify a leadership team in their school consisting of at least one administrator and one teacher and other members to serve as a liaison dealing with issues and information pertaining to: character development, equity and inclusion, safe schools. The names of members of each school team will reported to your school’s superintendent no later than September 30, 2009

A civilization flourishes when people plant trees under whose shade they will never sit.

Greek proverb