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The philosopher Bertram Russell has written that the good life is one that is inspired by love and guided by knowledge. By love, here, he means good intentions. Good intentions without knowledge is ineffective. But knowledge without good intentions, without character, is dangerous, and can do more harm than good.

I believe it is well known that I work hard to raise academic standards in the classroom. But I believe it is equally important to develop our students' character. For this reason, **I pay tribute to you, the teachers that are working hard to develop our students' character.**

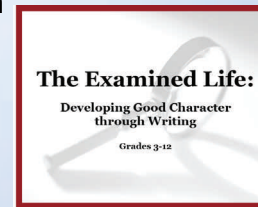
I first became interested in the subject many years ago, as a school board member. Some of you may remember when Guess jeans became stylish. Students were being subjected to peer pressure to spend twice as much for the same article of clothing, in order to get a label. I thought this pushed vulgar, materialistic values on the students, and it was cruel to those who could not afford it. So, we started character education across the curriculum in my district many years ago. Some of the pillars were slightly different than the ones we use now (integrity, rather than trustworthiness, etc.), but it was very similar to what you are doing. It was wildly successful, as it is now throughout the state, and I am a very strong believer in what you do. I hope we will be able to bring it to all of the schools before I leave office in 2010.

Again, **thank you for everything that you do to teach character to our students.** There is nothing more important for our society.
Tom Horne

Character Connections

September 2008

Trustworthiness is being honest, telling the truth, keeping promises and being loyal so people can trust you. Trustworthy people don't lie, cheat or steal. They have integrity and the moral courage to do the right thing and stand up for their beliefs even when it is hard. **Click on image below** for great ideas to teach writing skills in grades 3-12 while developing good character in students!



Quotes about trustworthiness...

A promise made is a debt unpaid. - Robert W. Service

If you don't want anyone to know, don't do it. - Chinese Proverb

Actions speak louder than words. - American Proverb

When the truth is in your way, you are on the wrong road. - Josh Billings

What is right is not always popular, and what is popular is not always right. - Unknown

It is better to be hated for what you are than loved for what you are not. - Andre Gide

A lie has speed but truth has endurance. - Edgar J. Mohn

What's New?

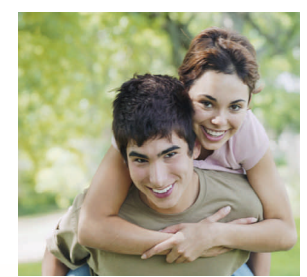


September 30th Character Education Matching Grant applications are accessible through ADE Grants Management. Call 602-542-1762 for more information! Due 9/30.

October 13th \$500 Mini-grants are available through the Arizona Character Education Foundation. Click **HERE** for application. Due 10/13.



November 28th 2009 Promising Practices Award application is now available online! Click **HERE** for more information. Due 11/28.



Spotlight on Coolidge Unified School District

The Coolidge Unified School District was ecstatic in November 2007, to receive confirmation that it had received one of the first matching grants from ADE to provide Character Education district-wide.

For several years, CUSD #21 has implemented Character Counts in isolated locations throughout the district to attempt to promote schools of character. Funding to this point however, had prevented district-wide implementation.

Selecting Character Counts, and the Josephson Institute of Ethics as the "Pre-approved Provider," the district proceeded to embark on a 2-day training provided by Dr. Gary Smit, a nationally recognized Character Counts trainer, February 28 and 29, 2008. Student, staff and parent surveys were conducted in December and January to assess pre-program conditions at school sites.

All six school sites and the Family Resource Center selected a minimum Character Counts team of 5 members to include Administrators, Counselor, Regular Ed Teacher, Special Ed Teacher, and an Instructional Aide. Others were allowed to attend as desired. Dr. Smit provided an intense 9 hours of training to all participants over a day and a half, culminating in "Action Plans" for implementation being developed for each site. The two day training concluded with a 2-hour all-District Staff Training in the Performing Arts Center for teachers, support staff, administration, bus drivers, custodians, and maintenance crews. The topic of Dr. Smit's presentation was "Creating Positive Moral Culture in the School."

Spring 2008 efforts were less than comprehensive but teams did meet to finalize implementation plans and conducted some introductory classroom presentations, in preparation for an all-district Character Counts focus to begin August 4, 2008-at the start of school. In the spring, materials were ordered, Dr Smit provided a public DVD Character Counts presentation for use with the local city television channel and Prevention Specialists and Counselors were trained to start "talking" Character Counts at every opportunity.

In addition, the District Discipline Referral Form was standardized to include reference to which pillar(s) were impacted by the student infraction so further reinforcement for Character Counts could be made at the time of principal/student conference.

All Staff training took place again on July 30 and 31, with four presentations on Character Counts by Todd McIntyre of Big Mouth Productions. Todd was provided to CUSD #21 for its opening school kickoff by ADE and the Character Counts Foundation.



Todd received rave reviews and Character Counts was rated as "The" best training for the event. Todd has since received requests from each school site for student assemblies in the early fall.

Goals for 2008-2009 include: Comprehensive integration of Character Counts into classrooms athletics, staff development, codes of conduct, parent and community outreach, and visual message.

The District will apply again for the matching grant for additional materials support but is feeling very confident that it is off to a great start to realizing its "Character Counts" designation 2008-2009.

*Dr. Bonnie E. Palmer
Director, CUSD#21/Family Resource Center*

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