

## 2008 Character Education Online Survey Summary

Thank you to all who participated in the character education online survey conducted by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and the Center for Academic Excellence (CAE). The results provide valuable information on character education programs and resources being used in Minnesota schools. The results will assist the Commissioner in implementing the character education legislation and identifying resources. The statewide distribution of responses evidence Minnesota schools' interest in and implementation of character education. See **Appendix A** to view the survey questions on the 2008 Character Education Online Survey.

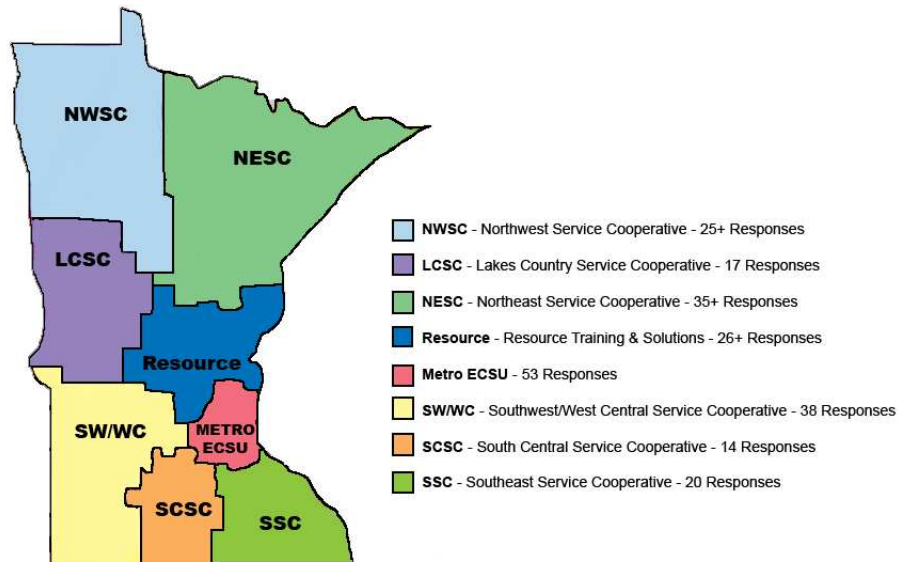
### SUMMARY DATA

The 2008 Character Education Survey data was compiled by the Minnesota Department of Education in partnership with the Center for Academic Excellence. [Visit the CAE Website.](#)

#### *Question 1 – Respondents*

The survey was completed by 235 respondents. Each provided contact information that will facilitate follow-up. The number and location of the responses have been categorized by Minnesota Service Cooperative regions.

#### Number and Distribution of Responses across Minnesota Service Cooperative Regions



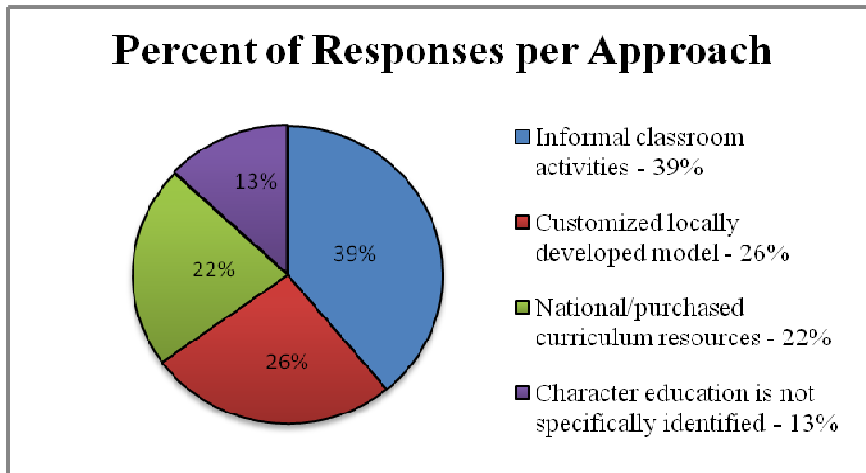
#### *Question 2 – School Level(s)*

Respondents were asked to check all categories that applied. The following categories were selected by the 235 respondents. More than half the respondents selected more than one category, partially due to the response of superintendents for an entire district. The districtwide responses helped provide more comprehensive information and will be included as a category in future surveys.

Grade Level	Number of Responses
Elementary	132
Middle School	104
High School	142

### Question 3 – Delivery Methods

Respondents were asked to select all that applied from four approaches schools use to deliver character education. There were 372 responses received.



The distribution of the responses shows that character education initiatives in Minnesota are primarily delivered through locally determined informal classroom activities and models that are customized, developed locally, or both. This is supported by Minnesota’s strong ethic for local control. Limited use of national/purchased curriculums may also reflect funding limitations.

### Question 4 – Challenges

More than 90 percent of the 235 respondents shared their opinions on what would prevent their school from implementing or expanding character education if funding were available. Although the survey did not present options, the following themes emerged from the comments:

Rank Order	Themes
1	Time
2	Alignment with current activities and curriculum
3	Staff training
4	Money for unfunded items
5	Staff or administrative support
6	Need for additional staff
7	Community support
8	Identifying quality programs
9	Focus on NCLB testing

Sixty-one respondents (or 29 percent) stated nothing would stand in the way if funding were available and that character education is essential.

Fifty-five respondents (or 23 percent) identified other factors that prevent implementation.

[View all comments related to Challenges.](#)

### ***Question 5 – Programs and/or Courses***

Respondents identified 187 unique programs and/or courses used to deliver character education. The comprehensive list supports Minnesota schools’ interest in local determination and implementation of character education. [View Programs and/or Courses for an alphabetical listing of responses.](#)

### ***Question 6 – Components***

Respondents identified one or more components from the list below as supporting their character education efforts. These components were selected from the U.S. Department of Education *Partnerships in Character Education, State Pilot Projects, 1995–2001 Lessons Learned*. Multiple responses by most respondents indicate character education initiatives in Minnesota draw on school personnel and resources as well as family and community involvement.

<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>Components</b>
118	Locally developed curriculum
110	Purchased curriculum
108	Professional development
104	Steering committee
104	Service learning
100	Districtwide goals
82	Family involvement
70	Community participation
42	Grant recipient

A substantial number identified student involvement as a component; however, the question did not differentiate as to how students were involved, so that component is not reported.

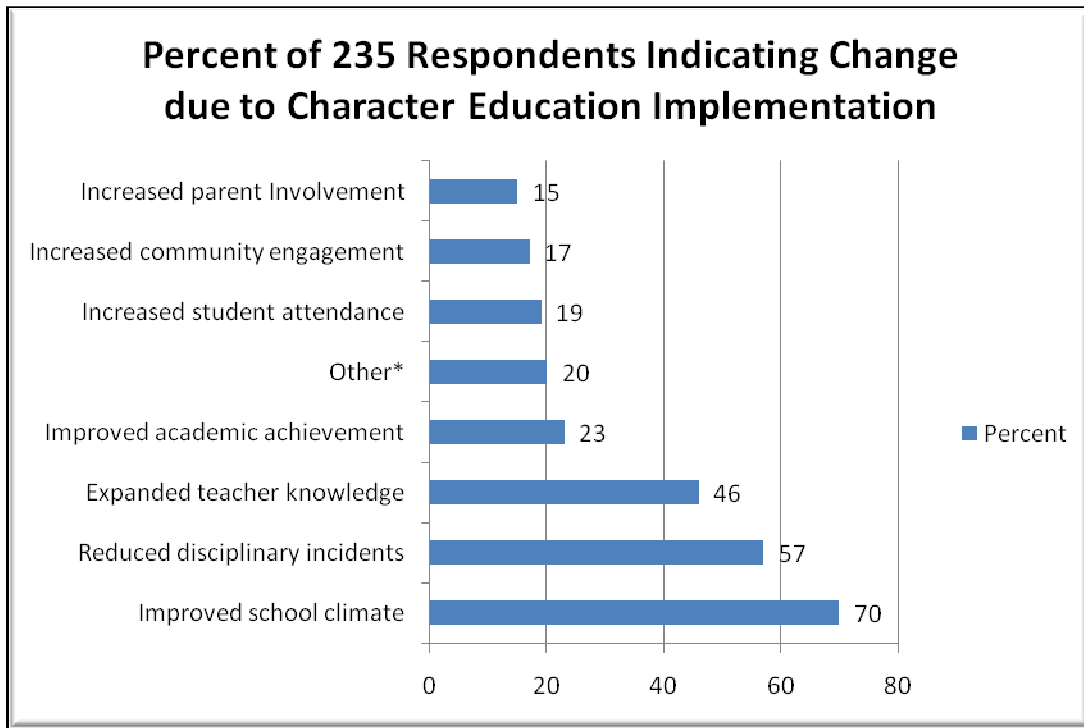
### ***Question 7 – Data Sources***

More than 400 responses demonstrate that schools use multiple sources to collect character education data. More than half of the respondents indicated the use of observation and surveys as their primary way of gathering character education data. This is followed by using school records, focus groups and interviews. Pre- and post-tests were the least used method. The extensive use of qualitative data sources and supporting use of quantitative data sources reflects character education’s focus on the whole child.

<b>Sources of Data Collected</b>	
<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>Data Sources</b>
124	Observation
115	Surveys
64	School records
40	Focus groups
34	Interviews
26	Pre- and post-tests

### ***Question 8 – Impact***

The following chart indicates the impact of character education and the changes experienced by the responding schools. The changes identified reinforce the important role character education plays in educating the whole child by working in concert with families and communities.



\*Those who selected ‘Other’ were requested to specify the change experienced. [View specific Impact Comments.](#)

### ***Question 9 – Comments for the Commissioner***

Comments submitted to the Commissioner have been forwarded to her attention.

- For questions regarding survey results, please contact [connie.j.anderson@state.mn.us](mailto:connie.j.anderson@state.mn.us).
- For information regarding character education resources and recognition programs, [visit the Center for Academic Excellence Website.](#)

## Appendix A

# Character Education Survey

Participation in this survey will serve to provide valuable information on character education programs and resources being used in Minnesota schools. This information will assist the Commissioner in implementing the following character education legislation:

120B.225 Section 19 CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION The legislature encourages districts to integrate or offer instruction on character education including, but not limited to, character qualities such as attentiveness, truthfulness, respect for authority, diligence, gratefulness, self-discipline, patience, forgiveness, respect for others, peacemaking, and resourcefulness. Instruction should be integrated into a district's existing programs, curriculum, or the general school environment. The commissioner shall provide assistance at the request of a district to develop character education curriculum and programs.

### 1. Please provide contact information to facilitate follow-up:

District #:   
District Name:   
Name of responder:   
E-mail of responder:

### 2. Please check all that apply in your school.

- Elementary
- Middle School
- High School

### 3. What approach does your school use to deliver Character Education? (Check all that apply.):

- Character Education is not specifically identified
- Informal classroom activities
- Customized locally developed model
- National/purchased curriculum resources

**4. Assuming funding for character education was available, what would prevent your school from implementing/expanding efforts in this area?**

**5. Please list any character education programs and/or courses used to deliver character education.**

Programs:

Courses:

**6. Which of the following are present in your Character Education efforts? (Check all that apply.):**

- Districtwide goals
- Steering committee/leadership team
- Professional development
- Purchased curriculum materials/resources
- Locally developed curriculum/resources
- Service Learning
- Family involvement
- Community participation
- Grant recipient
- Student involvement

**7. Indicate if your school has collected Character Education data from any of these sources. (Check all that apply.):**

- Surveys
- School records
- Pre- and post-tests
- Observation
- Interviews
- Focus groups

**8. Which of the following has been changed by the use of Character Education? (Check all that apply.):**

- Improved academic achievement
- Expanded teacher knowledge
- Reduced disciplinary incidents
- Increased student attendance
- Improved school climate
- Increased parent involvement
- Increased community engagement
- Other (please describe)

**9. Thank you for completing this survey. If you have anything that would further assist the Commissioner with character education, please comment.**

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