



## ***Background Information***

### **Area 1: Current Programming**

**Current Condition: There is a low awareness of current character/ethics programming.**

- The Center for Academic Excellence, in partnership with the MN Department of Education, conducted a Character Education Survey in 2008, which revealed 190 unique character education plans from approximately 200 responding schools. The survey results are available at:

<http://www.mncae.org/msoc/msoc.html>.

- Effective Character Education is an ethos or philosophy of education, not a single practice or stand alone program (Brannon, 2008, Character Education Partnership, What Works Clearinghouse, 2007). For a research-based document that describes what works in character education go to:

[http://www.character.org/uploads/PDFs/White\\_Papers/White\\_Paper\\_What\\_Works\\_Practitioner.pdf](http://www.character.org/uploads/PDFs/White_Papers/White_Paper_What_Works_Practitioner.pdf)

- The Blake School from Minneapolis, Schumann Elementary and Orono Middle School from Long Lake, and Ellis Middle School from Austin all received national recognition at the Character Education Partnership (CEP) 2009 National Forum on Character Education. For information regarding this award recognition, go to:

<http://www.mncae.org/msoc/msoc.html>.

### **Area 2: Business/Community Voice**

**Current Condition: Unethical employee behaviors negatively impact businesses in terms of lost revenue.**

- According to a recent survey, total retail losses increased last year to \$36.5 billion, up from \$34.8 billion in 2007. The majority of retail shrinkage last year was due to employee theft, at \$15.9 billion, which represented almost half of losses (44%). 14 percent of those cases involved collusion with outsiders. Shoplifting accounted for \$12.7 billion (35%) of losses. “While the economy plays a role in the amount of shoplifting around the country, these crimes are mostly the case of greed instead of need. People aren’t stealing to feed their families; they’re stealing iPods, handbags, and other discretionary items.”

[http://www.nrf.com/modules.php?name=News&op=viewlive&sp\\_id=746](http://www.nrf.com/modules.php?name=News&op=viewlive&sp_id=746)

- Henry “Hank” Shea has been one of the country's most effective white-collar crime prosecutors. His article, “*Top 10 Lists: Lessons Learned From White Collar Criminals*”, can be found at:

<http://www.stthomas.edu/lawmagazine/2008/Winter/top10list.html>

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## **Area 3: Evaluation of Whole-Child Approaches**

**Current Condition: Implementation of whole-child approaches to addressing the development of character and ethics is challenging.**

- The Minnesota Student Trends Survey addresses numerous topics that impact student learning:

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/mss/trendreports/index.html>

- The adoption of School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is widespread across the state of Minnesota:

[http://education.state.mn.us/mde/Learning\\_Support/Special\\_Education/Evaluation\\_Program\\_Planning\\_Supports/Positive\\_Behavioral\\_Interventions\\_Supports/index.html](http://education.state.mn.us/mde/Learning_Support/Special_Education/Evaluation_Program_Planning_Supports/Positive_Behavioral_Interventions_Supports/index.html)

- Problem solving strategies based on the Response to Intervention Model can be found at:

<http://www.scred.k12.mn.us/School/Index.cfm/go:site.Page/Page:3/Area:4/index.html>

- Many elementary schools use the Responsive Classroom strategies with a goal of a school-wide approach:

[www.responsiveclassroom.org/](http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/)

[http://www.originonline.org/rc\\_index.php](http://www.originonline.org/rc_index.php)

## **Area 4: Family-Student Responsibility**

**Current Condition: Students and families need to better understand that they have educational responsibilities.**

- Paragraph taken from the Maryland Character Education Project, 2003:

Although there have always been some apprehensions about perceived declines in personal and community values, today many thoughtful people ask whether there have been substantial negative changes in recent decades. Although it is difficult to pinpoint when there was a shift in our character ideals paradigm, when a range of national values may have been significantly altered, some point to the late nineteen sixties and seventies. If so, that paradigmatic cultural shift, as with most dramatic changes, may have had both good and bad consequences. The most obvious of the good was the increase in the personal rights of men, women, and children. Other consequences may not have been as beneficial. As we celebrated increased personal autonomy and individual freedom, many believe we may have sacrificed too much of our traditional sense of community, our collective notions of patriotism and civility and community voluntarism, our moral compass, our ethical code of conduct in the workplace, on the athletic field, and in schools, and our respect for the property, dignity and rights of others. Responsibility for family and sexual conduct has seemingly been diminished by popular culture. Children are increasingly at risk because of disrupted families and the absence of responsible adult guidance. Of course, this is not to suggest that our nation isn't daily benefiting from a vast population of honest, dutiful and caring citizens. The question is whether more people are now willing to accept lowered standards in a variety of circumstances in the workplace, in schools and in personal and community relationships.

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<http://www.mdctrcharacter.org/mission.shtml>

- Changing demographics:

<http://www.lmc.org/page/1/changing-demographics.jsp>

<http://www.demography.state.mn.us/DownloadFiles/PopulationProjectionsRaceHispanicOrigin.pdf>

[http://education.state.mn.us/ReportCard2005/demographics.do?SCHOOL\\_NUM=000&DISTRICT\\_NUM=9999&DISTRICT\\_TYPE=99](http://education.state.mn.us/ReportCard2005/demographics.do?SCHOOL_NUM=000&DISTRICT_NUM=9999&DISTRICT_TYPE=99)

- Changing dynamics of Families and Work:

[http://www.familiesandwork.org/site/research/reports/Times\\_Are\\_Changing.pdf](http://www.familiesandwork.org/site/research/reports/Times_Are_Changing.pdf)

[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/10/technology/10morning.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/10/technology/10morning.html?_r=1)

[http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p\\_mla\\_apa\\_research\\_citation/1/8/5/2/0/pages185202/p185202-1.php](http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/1/8/5/2/0/pages185202/p185202-1.php)

- Changing dynamics of Communities:

[http://www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/files/FINALYouth\\_Engagment\\_8.15pdf.pdf](http://www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/files/FINALYouth_Engagment_8.15pdf.pdf)

<http://www.communitychange.org/who-we-are/who-we-are>

<http://minnesota.publicradio.org/collections/special/columns/todays-question/archive/2009/08/do-you-want-to-know-your-neighbors.shtml>

### **Area 5: Funding**

**Current Condition: Education funding is flat to declining on a per pupil basis without any current character/ethics allocation.**

- Funding is important not only for development and initial implementation, but for ongoing maintenance and growth of the character education ethos. Character education requires a commitment of time, training, and resources. A review of state pilot projects by the Character Education Partnership (2008) found funding to be a barrier to states and schools.

<http://www.character.org/index.cfm>

- Evidence-based programs consist of practices that are done within known parameters and with accountability to consumers and funders of those practices (Implementation Research).

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/charactered/index.html>

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## **Area 6: Local Control**

**Current Condition: Character/ethics education is not on the agenda of school boards, parents and community members.**

- As part of NCLB, character education exists in the shadow of academic achievement and accountability.

The Minnesota Academic Standards in History and Social Studies Standards VII A, B and C address civic duties:

[http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET\\_FILE&dDocName=006219&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary](http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=006219&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary)

- The focus of character education in a school is often influenced by the presence or absence of a school administrator that believes in and advocates character education. The result is that character education is person driven.

<http://www.cehd.umn.edu/CAREI/Leadership/>

- Effective Character Education is intentional and public (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005).

[http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational\\_leadership/sept05/vol63/num01/abstract.aspx#Character\\_Education@\\_Parents\\_as\\_Partners](http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/sept05/vol63/num01/abstract.aspx#Character_Education@_Parents_as_Partners)

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/WWC/reports/topic.aspx?tid=12#s=3>

- Collective Responsibility in Ethics and Excellence

[http://www.cortland.edu/character/instruments/CREE\\_description\\_wItems\\_v2p1.pdf](http://www.cortland.edu/character/instruments/CREE_description_wItems_v2p1.pdf)

## **Area 7: Program Content**

**Current Condition: Educators should use character/ethics education for more than useful reminders to do homework and obey school decorum rules.**

- Promising Practices at the state level:

<http://www.mncae.org/msoc/msoc.html>

- Promising Practices at the national level:

<http://www.character.org/promisingpracticesoverview>

- 11 Principles of Effective Character Education

[http://www.character.org/uploads/PDFs/Eleven\\_Principles.pdf](http://www.character.org/uploads/PDFs/Eleven_Principles.pdf)

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## **Area 8: Reporting/Accountability**

**Current Condition: Character/ethics education is not currently linked to learning and accountability measures, strategies or reporting.**

- Thomas Lickona, in his book, *Character Matters* (Touchstone, 2004), argues that a strong academic program emphasizes character development.

<http://www.characteredprep.org/SummaryLickona.pdf>

- Increased academic achievement was reported by 60% of schools that participated in an evaluation of character education programming.

<http://www.character.org/resultsofcharactereducation?s=academic%20achievement%2060%25>

## **Area 9: School Choice**

**Current Condition: It is the perception that character/ethics education is more a characteristic of private than public schools.**

- 26% of homeschool parents cited a poor learning environment at school as a reason for homeschooling:

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2006/homeschool/parentsreasons.asp>

- Private school teachers were more likely than public school teachers to say that they had a lot of influence on setting student performance standards (63 versus 38 percent) and on student discipline policy (48 versus 30 percent).

<http://www.publicschoolreview.com/articles/5>

## **Area 10: Statewide Conference**

**Current Condition: A statewide character/ethics conference has not taken place from which every teacher could participate in conversations and receive training about character/ethics education.**

- **National Character Education Conference Website:**

<http://www.ncec.ca/>

## **Area 11: Structural Positioning**

**Current Condition: There is not an organized structure in the state of Minnesota to gather and disseminate information or support initiatives for character/ethics education.**

The Character Education Partnership identifies four approaches used by states to address character education.

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## *States that MANDATE character education (18)*

Alabama	Georgia	New York	Utah
Alaska	Illinois	North Carolina	Virginia
Arkansas	Indiana	South Carolina	West Virginia
California	Kentucky	South Dakota	
Florida	Nebraska	Tennessee	

## *States that ENCOURAGE character education (18)*

Arizona	Louisiana	Mississippi	Rhode Island
Colorado	Maine	Ohio	Texas
Delaware	Maryland	Oklahoma	Washington
Iowa	Michigan	Oregon	
Kansas	<b>Minnesota</b>	Pennsylvania	

Minnesota's Character Education Statute:

- 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. (Minnesota State Statute 120B.232).

## **States which SUPPORT character education, but without legislation (7)**

Connecticut	Missouri	New Jersey	Vermont
Hawaii	Montana	North Dakota	

## **Does not have legislation specifically addressing character education (8)**

District of Columbia	Massachusetts	New Hampshire	Wisconsin
Idaho	Nevada	New Mexico	Wyoming

## **Area 12: Teacher Education**

**Current Condition: The teacher training programs in our colleges and universities provide little attention to character/ethics education as a distinct aspect of curriculum.**

- Classroom teachers are often the first level of implementation. Federal and state legislation does not address teacher preparation to implement the character education approach. Teachers are the primary implementers of character education, yet they receive little or no training in teacher education programs to prepare them (Lickona, 1993).
- In recent years, there has been a significant movement at the elementary level with intentional teaching of pro-social behaviors via implementation of programs such as the Responsive Classroom. High School programs have been less successful due to scheduling issues that directly conflict with the idea of allowing teachers to personally connect with students.

Degrees of Implementation (Hernandez & Hodges, 2003)

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- *Paper Implementation* - putting into place new policies and procedures with the adoption of an innovation as the rationale for the policies and procedures. Paper implementations may be especially prevalent when outside groups are monitoring focuses on the paper trail.
- *Process Implementation* - putting new operating procedures in place to conduct training workshops, provide supervision, change information reporting forms, and so on. Trappings of evidence-based practices and programs ("corporate culture programs," training courses, quality circles) plus lip service do not equal putting innovations into practice with benefits to consumers.
- *Performance Implementation* - putting procedures and processes in place in such a way that the identified functional components of change are used with good effects for consumers. It appears that implementation that produces actual benefits to consumers, organizations and systems requires careful and thoughtful efforts.