

Aspects of Character

Aspects of character are both preconditions to, and consequences of, learning. Effort, perseverance and intellectual curiosity are determinants of effective goal-setting and achievement. Respect for oneself and others influences social behavior. To contribute to the vitality of modern society, students must understand the necessity of moral, ethical and legal conduct, and strive to balance individual rights with the common good. Responsibility and integrity, and citizenship and sense of community are the foundations for constructive and productive participation in a democratic society.

The family, as well as societal forces other than schools, plays major roles in fostering positive aspects of character that are critical to the successful development of lifelong learners, productive workers and effective citizens. At the school level the guidance department has a role in developing the character of students and ensuring that these aspects of character are reinforced in all disciplines. While it is inappropriate for schools to accept the sole or even primary responsibility for developing these aspects of character, it is also inappropriate to deny the critical importance of these factors as preconditions to learning, and as consequences of the teaching of all disciplines to all students.

Responsibility and Integrity

✓ *Students demonstrate a sense of ethics and take responsibility for their commitments and actions.*

As part of education in Grades K-12, students will:

- demonstrate honesty, dependability and self-control;
- assume responsibility for their behavior, think before they act, consider the possible consequences on all people affected by their actions, and assume responsibility for the consequences of those actions;
- develop criteria for making informed judgments and decisions, and uphold their beliefs in order to conduct themselves in a moral, ethical and legal manner; and
- assume primary responsibility for learning, including identifying their needs and setting reasonable goals.

Effort and Persistence

- ✓ *Students demonstrate the effort and persistence needed to be successful in school, work and life.*

As part of education in Grades K-12, students will:

- develop initiative to accept challenges and responsibilities which will help them grow and to which they can make a contribution;
- persist on their own, without the need for close supervision;
- persist until new material is mastered or until a job is done, and experience the pride of accomplishment that results from hard work;
- act through a desire to succeed rather than a fear of failure, while recognizing that failure is a part of everyone's experience;
- take the risks necessary for fulfilling their ambitions, and persevere in the face of challenge and obstacles; and
- respond constructively to criticism, being willing and able to incorporate suggestions from others into their efforts to grow.

Intellectual Curiosity

- ✓ *Students actively explore the world of ideas.*

As part of education in Grades K-12, students will:

- demonstrate inquiring attitudes, open-mindedness and curiosity;
- create and explore new ideas and adapt existing ideas to generate alternative possibilities;
- demonstrate independence of thought necessary for leadership and creativity; and
- pursue lifelong learning.

Respect

- ✓ *Students demonstrate respect for themselves and others.*

As part of education in Grades K-12, students will:

- appreciate their worth as unique and capable individuals and exhibit self-esteem;
- develop a sense of their effectiveness and a belief in their ability to shape their future;
- demonstrate a sensitivity to, and respect for, the perspectives, opinions, needs and customs of others; and
- judge others on their merits and be tolerant, appreciative and accepting of individual differences.

Citizenship and Sense of Community

✓ *Students are active, constructive members of the larger community.*

As part of education in Grades K-12, students will:

- develop a sense of belonging to a group larger than friends, family and co-workers;
- stay informed about and participate in decisions regarding school, community, state, country and world;
- develop an understanding of the importance of each individual to the improvement of the quality of life for all in the community; and
- understand and appreciate their historical and ethnic heritage as well as the heritage of others within the larger community.