CHARACTER & SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CSED)

Model Standards

Moral Character	Self Awareness
Performance Character	Self Management
Intellectual Character	Interpersonal/ Relationship Skills
Civic Character	Social Awareness
Responsible & Ethical Decision-Making	
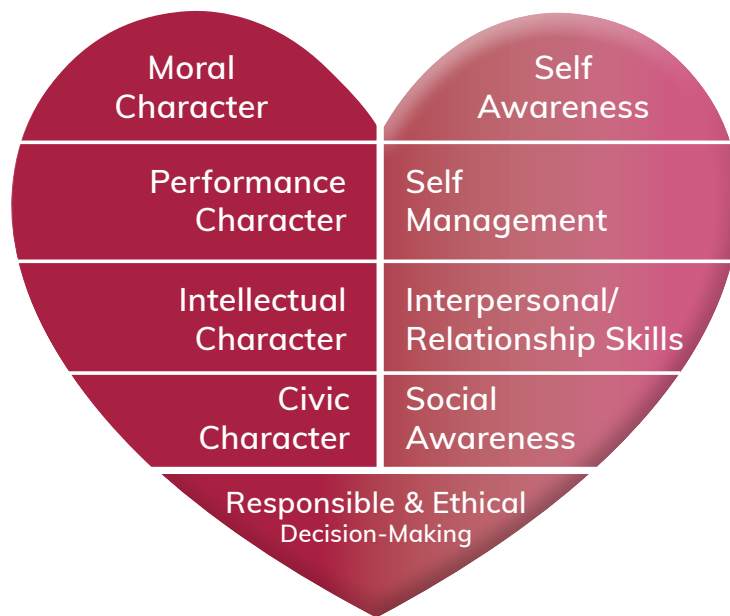
Character.org

Washington, D.C.

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Section 1

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

As parents, classroom teachers, counselors, principals, superintendents, researchers, and community leaders we care deeply about schools and the future of education.

We support the CSED Model Standards developed by Character.org with a single purpose in mind: to provide states, schools districts, and individual schools with a comprehensive framework that supports, nurtures, and fosters the whole child.

Teachers and school leaders have always believed their professional mission extends far beyond a child learning to write a sentence or multiply. Teachers also want their children to be honest, caring, and curious (among other positive qualities).

We call these qualities **character strengths**. Part One of the Model Standards (Section 4) identifies and explains the different character strengths that exemplify moral, performance, intellectual, and civic character. [1]

Current research also shows that it is essential for young people to develop a range of **social and emotional skills and competencies**. Part Two of the Model Standards (Section 4) of the CSED Model Standards identifies and explains the five areas of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL): self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, interpersonal/relationship skills, and responsible & ethical decision-making. [2]

Section 3 offers readers a Conceptual Framework that starts with the needs of the developing child and includes a positive pathway (e.g., the SEL competencies and character strengths) that culminates with all children graduating from high school as thriving persons of character. We also provide readers with more information and perspective on how the SEL competencies and character strengths connect and align together (Section 5, page 30).

[1]*See Character Compass: How powerful school culture can point students towards success* by Dr. Scott Seider (Harvard University Press, 2012).

[2]We are grateful to the groundbreaking research conducted by the scholars affiliated with the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

Our Six Core Beliefs:

1   **The family is a child's first character educator.** Children first learn about caring, sacrifice, and fairness within the context of their family. It's in the home where children learn about the different character strengths, such as responsibility ("pick up your toys") or respect ("don't interrupt").

2   **Character strengths and SEL skills are not add-ons, but rather add significant value to student success.** Research has demonstrated that focusing on character and social-emotional development increases academic achievement.[3]

3   **A positive school climate is critical to fostering the whole child.** Every person involved in the life of the school – from the superintendent to the cafeteria worker – should strive to uphold and model the norms and core values of the building to ensure that every child is socially, emotionally, and physically safe.

4   **Character and social-emotional development requires thinking, feeling, and doing (head, heart, and hands).** A holistic approach is required for elementary, middle and high school children to develop the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dispositions to do the right thing or do one's best work. Exemplary schools inspire their students to understand, care about, and practice the core values and principles that serve the common good.

5   **The character strengths should be taught, caught – and sought.** There is emerging research suggesting that young people need to internalize and "own" their own character development and social-emotional learning. The CSED Model Standards provide opportunities for students of all ages to seek out and discover the timeless principles and core values that define their moral compass. The goal is to challenge each student to demonstrate how he or she is striving to be motivated by intrinsic reasons. [4]

6   **The CSED Model Standards align with the full-range of classroom and school-based initiatives.** In preparing these Model Standards, Character.org reviewed a wide range of research and publications to ensure we were incorporating current research and educational approaches. These Model Standards align with the full range of current educational approaches, including multi-tiered systems of support, developmentally appropriate practices (DAP), school climate initiatives, service and project-based learning, PBIS, mental health and trauma-informed initiatives, college and career readiness programs, responsive classrooms, restorative practices, student-centered learning, the ASCD Whole Child Initiative, the Mental Health Services for Schools Act, and various local, state and national initiatives that focus on positive youth development, bully prevention, alcohol, drug, and opioid abuse prevention, youth suicide prevention, and school safety.

[3]See Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor & Schellinger (2011). *Child Development, The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions.* Also, M. Berkowitz and M. Bier (2007), *Journal of Research on Character Education, What Works in Character Education.*

[4]See *Aristotelian Character Education* by Kristjan Kristjansson (Routledge, 2015).

CONCLUSION

The CSED Model Standards are an opportunity for states, school districts, and individual schools to adopt and use the most comprehensive framework that supports, nurtures, and fosters the whole child.

We believe the five SEL competencies and the four character dimensions are critical for every student to learn and practice. These competencies and character strengths are the essential building blocks and stepping stones to children and teens developing and modeling the positive qualities associated with moral, performance, intellectual, and civic character.

The CSED Model Standards will also help our students excel academically. Students who need to solve a confounding math problem will do better when they can confidently leverage their SEL skills to manage their personal stress. In addition, when asked to write a research paper students will access their character strengths (i.e., by being honest or avoiding carelessness).

In sum, we believe character is the product of the core values, principles, and ideals we seek to practice (e.g., the Golden Rule, taking responsibility, being a friend, being honest, developing a growth mindset). These Model Standards provide a roadmap for caring school leaders and teachers to help children and teens understand, care about, and consistently practice the character strengths that will enable them to flourish in school, in relationships, in the workplace, and as citizens.

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Section 2

ABOUT CHARACTER.ORG

In 1993, a group of educators, researchers, and civic leaders came together to form a national organization devoted to fostering character development in our schools and communities.

Ever since, the mission of Character.org has been to provide the voice, visibility, and resources for educators to build nurturing and supportive school cultures that focus on a set of core values and character strengths vital to school success.

Character.org is widely known for its 11 Principles Framework for Schools: A Guide to Cultivating a Character-Inspired Culture, a comprehensive framework developed by school leaders and character education researchers. During the past 20 years, more than 900 schools – after an independent and rigorous evaluation process – have been recognized by Character.org as National Schools of Character. More recently, school districts have also been certified for their success in fostering character development.

The vision for Character.org is to continue supporting schools while expanding our work to families and youth sports. In fact, we believe employers everywhere should follow the adage: "hire for character, train for skill." By meeting people in every avenue of life, we hope to inspire and empower ethical, engaged, and compassionate citizens worldwide.
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Section 3

CHARACTER & SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT:
A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

THE DEVELOPING CHILD & TEEN → CARING & SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS → OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN & PRACTICE (CHARACTER STRENGTHS/ SEL SKILLS) → A THRIVING & STRIVING PERSON OF CHARACTER

The Developing Child & Teen: We know from recent research that there are essential "building blocks" of development, ranging from a child's cognitive and physical growth to how teenagers learn to manage their emotions and navigate relationships. The science also tells us that a child's development is nonlinear; no two children or teens are alike. Every young person has a different set of skills, interests and motivations that informs and shapes her unique pacing and developmental pathway. Yet researchers have identified a range of critical factors that predict and promote positive, healthy development (i.e., the mindsets and behaviors of a thriving child or teen who consistently practice the SEL skills and character strengths).
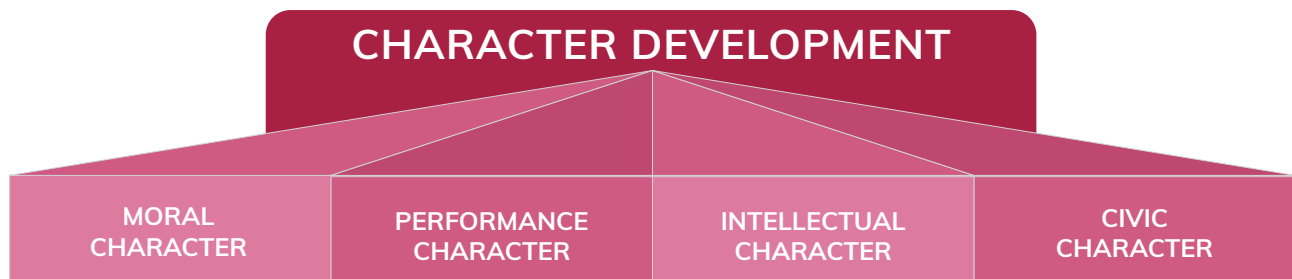
Caring & Supportive Environments: The developing child is nested within a number of contexts (e.g., families, peers, schools, faith communities, after-school activities, neighborhoods). In addition, macro-contexts and structures also shape every child (e.g., economic and cultural systems). In sum, children and teens always grow and develop in context to their environment. We also know from the research that caring and supporting adults can buffer and help reduce the stress and trauma that almost every child and teen experiences. Our role as adults -- whether in the home, school or community -- is to offer and provide a "constructive web" for every child and teen to learn and practice the SEL skills and character strengths.[5]

Opportunities to Learn & Practice: School-aged children and especially teens are active agents in their own learning. However, research confirms that well-scaffolded, engaging and evidence-based instructional and curricular design (both in the home, classroom, and after-school activities) can impact the development of self-regulation and executive functions. More specifically, the five SEL competencies and the different character strengths highlighted in these Model Standards are critical for every child to learn and practice (via what educators often call "Head, Heart and "Hand"). Together, these are the essential building blocks for children and teens to demonstrate the skills and character strengths that encompass moral, performance, intellectual, and civic character.

A Thriving/Striving Person of Character: Fused together, the SEL skills and the four areas of character express the penultimate goal for all parents and educators: a thriving and striving person of character. Our goal as parents and educators ought to be more than raising or graduating smart teenagers. We also want our children and students to be kind and honest and indviduals who other people trust. In sum...a good person. Developmentally, the ultimate "home run" is raising and graduating young people with a "striving mindset" -- a lifelong conviction and active commitment to becoming their best possible selves by consistently practicing, improving, and modeling the SEL skills and character strengths described in these Model Standards.

Section 4

THE CSED MODEL STANDARDS (PART 1)

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CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

MORAL          PERFORMANCE       INTELLECTUAL        CIVIC
CHARACTER      CHARACTER         CHARACTER           CHARACTER
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CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Definition: Character development is a comprehensive and holistic approach that parents, teachers and all caring adults use to help students understand, care about and consistently practice the virtues and core values that will enable our students to flourish in school, in relationships, in the workplace, and as citizens. Honesty. Compassion. Responsibility. Grit. Curiosity. Critical thinking. Fairness. Respect. Service. These character strengths, among others, express our common humanity and transcend religious, cultural, or ethnic differences.

MORAL CHARACTER

Definition: Moral character is the character strengths of honesty and integrity, caring and compassion, gratitude, and the courage to take initiative.

Outcomes: All students demonstrating the habits and virtues of honesty and integrity, the compassion to never underestimate the power of a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, or the smallest act of caring for others who may need their help and support, to be grateful to people (and places) that nourish their talents and spirit, to use their leadership and "courage muscle" to stand up for what is fair and right.

A. Know, understand and practice the character strengths of honesty and integrity, caring and compassion, gratitude, and the courage to take initiative

Grades K-2, ages 5-7

1. Understand what being honest means and why honesty is a character strength

2. Understand what stealing is and why stealing is wrong

3. Understand what cheating is and why cheating is wrong (e.g., copying answers, giving answers to a friend, getting someone else to do your work for you)

4. Understand why keeping a promise is a character strength

5. Understand why caring and being concerned for the well-being of others is a character strength

6. Understand what gratitude is (the ability to recognize and express appreciation) and why practicing gratitude is a character strength

Grades 3-5, ages 8-10

1. Explain what it means for a person to act with integrity (e.g, "walk their talk")

2. Understand what it means to be trustworthy and how you earn someone's trust

3. Understand and explain the expression "I have the courage to stand up for what is wrong or unfair"

4. Offer examples of caring and compassionate behaviors (at home, in school, in the community)

5. Offer examples of when you expressed gratitude to another person

Grades 6-8, ages 11-13

1. Understand and explain why "white lies" often lead to bigger lies

2. Understand and explain why it's important to do the right thing, even when no one is looking

3. List and explain the reasons why people sometimes lie, steal, or cheat (e.g., "everybody is doing it")

4. Understand and explain why the expression "to get along, go along" may prevent some people from being an "active bystander"

5. Understand and explain why caring (and helping others) should never be motivated by the likelihood of being recognized or rewarded for your help or support

6. List and explain the reasons why people sometimes do not care or help others

7. List and explain the reasons why people sometimes do not express their appreciation and gratitude

Grades 9-12, ages 14-18+

1. Explain what it means to be a "person of integrity"

2. Explain the reasons why "trustworthiness" is essential in schools, in the workplace, government, communities, sports, friendships, etc.)

3. Present research on the concept of moral courage (taking action for ethical reasons despite risk or fear of negative consequences)

4. Understand why compassion is a character strength (e.g., compassion involves noticing and emotionally reacting to another person's pain in some way that helps to ease or alleviate the pain)

5. Understand why it is important to show compassion for people outside your circle of friends or community – including those who may live in another part of the world

6. Understand how gratitude holds together and strengthens relationships (among family and friends, at school, in the workplace, etc.)

B. Apply and demonstrate the character strengths of honesty and integrity, caring and compassion, gratitude, and the courage to take initiative

Grades K-2, ages 5-7

1. Describe a time when you demonstrated honesty as a character strength

2. Describe a time when you kept your promise, even if it was difficult to do so

3. Share an example of when you practiced caring as a character strength

4. Share an example of when you practiced gratitude as a character strength

Grades 3-5, ages 8-10

1. Provide an example of a friend or role model who demonstrates honesty

2. Provide an example of a friend or role model who demonstrates integrity and trustworthiness

3. Provide an example of a friend or role model who "stood up" for what he or she thought was wrong or unfair

4. Provide an example of a friend or role model who demonstrates caring and compassion

5. Provide an example of a friend or role model who demonstrates gratitude

Grades 6-8, ages 11-13

1. Write about a time when you persuaded a friend to not lie, steal, or cheat

2. Write about a time when you did the right thing, even when no one was looking (i.e., a time when you chose "the harder right over the easier wrong")

3. Provide an example of a time when you demonstrated the courage of an active bystander

4. Provide an example when you helped others who needed your support and care

5. Provide an example of a time when you expressed your gratitude to someone beyond your family and friends

Grades 9-12, ages 14-18+

1. Present evidence that being a "person of integrity" is core to your self-identity

2. Share with a younger person who looks up to you about a time when you "did the right thing" even though there was peer pressure to do otherwise

3. Present evidence that caring and showing compassion for others is core to your self-identity

4. Write a letter (to a mentor, teacher, coach, or neighbor) that expresses your gratitude for how he or she has helped you, motivated and inspired you, and how this person has made a significant difference in your life

Resources to Explore:

- The **School for Ethical Education** offers professional development opportunities for secondary teachers who seek to inspire their students to act with integrity.

- The **International Center for Academic Integrity** combats cheating, plagiarism, and academic dishonesty through research and dissemination.

- The **Caring Schools Network**, based at Harvard University, focuses on creating a school culture where children care for others and the common good.

- The **Greater Good Science Center** at the University of California-Berkeley has created a strengths-based gratitude curriculum for middle and high school students.

- **Training Active Bystanders** is a non-profit organization that equips young people with the competencies to take action when they witness something they feel is unfair, wrong, or troubling.

PERFORMANCE CHARACTER

Definition: Performance character is the character strengths of self-discipline, responsibility, goal setting, and grit.

Outcomes: All students demonstrating the habits and virtues to always give their best effort because there are no short cuts to any place worth going, to be seen by others as trustworthy, dependable and reliable, to become their "best possible self" by showing the passion and perseverance toward a noble goal that will require them to get outside their comfort zone.

A. Know, understand and practice the character strengths of self-discipline, responsibility, goal setting and grit

Grades K-2, ages 5-7

1. Understand how forming positive habits develops a person's self-discipline

2. Explain willpower (e.g., learning to say no to your immediate impulses)

3. Understand how a person demonstrates responsibility (finishing what you start, putting things away, being on time)

4. Explain why it is important for everyone to set goals

Grades 3-5, ages 8-10

1. Explain how he or she demonstrates self-discipline (the ability to forgo instant and immediate gratification for a larger goal or commitment)

2. Explain why responsibility is an important character strength (e.g., being dependable, reliable, and conscientious)

3. Explain why it is a character strength to take responsibility for your behavior and conduct, rather than offer or make excuses

4. Learn the five steps to setting goals (specific, challenging, self-commit, create daily reminders, seek feedback and support)

5. Define grit (e.g., perseverance and passion for a long-term goal)

Grades 6-8, ages 11-13

1. Explain a personal commitment you have made to improve your self-discipline (e.g., planning and managing your time, orderliness, being kind, etc.)

2. Describe three core responsibilities you want others to hold you accountable for

3. Explain a time when you took responsibility for your mistakes

4. Explain a time when you took responsibility for your words and actions

5. Explain why goal setting is a character strength

6. Describe a role model who demonstrates a positive attitude, effort, and grit

Grades 9-12, ages 14-18+

1. Explain how you are taking charge of yourself, rather than merely following the rules established by your family or school

2. Give an example of a habit you have developed because you wanted to become a better person

3. Explain the relationship between being responsible and a person's reputation

4. Understand how establishing personal goals creates the motivational energy to achieve that goal

5. Explain a time when you had a "setback" but your grit kept you motivated

6. Understand that you can control only two things: (1) your attitude; and, (2) your effort

B. Apply and demonstrate the character strengths of self-discipline, responsibility, goal setting and grit

Grades K-2, ages 5-7

1. Offer examples when you show willpower (e.g., learning to say no to your immediate impulses)

2. Give an example of a positive habit that has helped you develop self-discipline

3. Provide evidence that you consistently demonstrate responsibility

4. Give an example of a goal you have set for yourself

Grades 3-5, ages 8-10

1. Provide an example of a friend or role model who demonstrates self-discipline (the ability to forgo instant and immediate gratification for a larger goal or commitment)

2. Provide an example of a friend or role model who is dependable, reliable, and conscientious (responsible)

3. Explain a time when you took responsibility for your behavior and conduct, rather than offering or making excuses

4. Provide an example of a role model who demonstrates grit (perseverance and passion for a long-term goal)

Grades 6-8, ages 11-13

1. Give examples from your own life to exemplify the expression "first we form habits, then our habits form us"

2. Present evidence to explain how other people depend on you to be responsible (at home, in school, among friends, sports or clubs)

3. Provide evidence that you have integrated the five steps to a personal goal (specific, challenging, self-commit, create daily reminders, seek feedback and support)

4. Explain a time when you did not take responsibility for your mistakes

5. Explain a time when you did not take responsibility for your words and actions

6. Present evidence to demonstrate your grit

CHARACTER & SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
MODEL STANDARDS

Grades 9-12, ages 14-18+

1. Give examples from personal experience that exemplify the expression "self-discipline is about keeping promises to yourself"

2. Explain to someone who looks up to you about a positive habit you have developed or a negative habit you changed

3. Explain a time when you persuaded someone else to be responsible

4. Present an example of your best work that you created for intrinsic, self-defining reasons (compared to wanting a particular grade or passing a class)

5. Explain to someone who looks up to you how setting goals has helped you improve or enhance a particular character strength

6. Explain how you helped a friend or family member be "gritty" (to show perseverance and passion for a long-term goal)

7. Explain a time when you took ownership of your attitude and effort, even when others around you were not

Resources to Explore:

- The publication **Smart and Good High Schools**, by Thomas Lickona and Matt Davidson, includes groundbreaking research on performance character.

- **Character Lab**, founded by Professor Angela Duckworth at the University of Pennsylvania, equips parents and educators to foster grit in children, among other character strengths.

- **Character Counts** is a non-profit organization that focuses on six pillars of character. Responsibility is one of the six pillars.

- **AthleteAssessments**, founded by 3x Olympic medalist Bo Hanson, emphasizes how participating in sports develops a young person's performance character.

INTELLECTUAL CHARACTER

Definition: Intellectual character is the character strengths of curiosity, carefulness, intellectual autonomy and humility, open-mindedness, critical thinking.

Outcomes: All students demonstrating the virtues and habits of mind to be critical thinkers who ask great questions and are curious about learning new things, to strive for accuracy and avoid being sloppy or careless, to think independently and learn from their mistakes, to make reasoned judgments after objectively analyzing pertinent facts and information, and to be creative and practice "outside the box" thinking.

A. Know, understand and practice the character strengths of curiosity, carefulness, intellectual autonomy and humility, open-mindedness, and critical thinking

Grades K-2, ages 5-7

1. Describe what it means to be curious

2. Understand why it is important for learners to avoid being sloppy or careless

3. Recognize different approaches to problem-solving

Grades 3-5, ages 8-10

1. Describe why it is important for learners to be curious

2. Understand the skills (being prepared, focused effort, diligent practice, attention to detail, etc.) that enable someone to acquire or polish a skill

3. Recognize that making mistakes is an unavoidable part of learning ("failing forward")

Grades 6-8, ages 11-13

1. Assess and recognize his or her own intellectual character strengths and weaknesses

2. Identify individuals, fiction and real, past and present, who exemplify the different intellectual character strengths in a concrete and compelling manner.

3. Recognize and understand why the intellectual character strengths are not innate (something you are born with) but can be developed with practice and support

4. Understand what it means to be an "active listener" (e.g., intellectual humility)

5. Understand the difference between facts and opinions (or feelings)

Grades 9-12, ages 14-18+

1. Explain why it is important to cultivate a life-long love of learning, wisdom and truth

2. Recognize how critical thinking skills are useful both inside and outside the classroom

3. Learn how to make a reason judgment after analyzing data, facts, and information

B. Apply and demonstrate the character strengths of curiosity, carefulness, intellectual autonomy and humility, open-mindedness, and critical thinking

Grades K-2, ages 5-7

1. Demonstrate genuine curiosity related to learning something new

2. Practice steps and "mental habits" to avoid being sloppy or careless

3. Apply different problem-solving approaches

Grades 3-5, ages 8-10

1. Explain how a particular historical or contemporary person practiced curiosity

2. Provide evidence that he or she has intentionally worked to strengthen a particular intellectual skill (diligence, attention to detail, etc.)

3. Share a time when he or she has made a mistake and learned from the experience

4. Demonstrate the ability to analyze data, facts, and information

Grades 6-8, ages 11-13

1. Present evidence to demonstrate how he or she has strengthened and improved one intellectual character strength through intentional effort and practice.

2. Practice and receive feedback on the ability to be an "active listener"

3. Create a portfolio of projects and assessments that demonstrates both active-learning and open-minded thinking

4. Compare and contrast perspectives and defend a position (e.g., intellectual autonomy)

Grades 9-12, ages 14-18+

1. Engage in self-directed, independent research motivated by his or her curiosity

2. Present evidence to demonstrate his or her intrinsic motivation to cultivate a life-long love of learning, wisdom, and truth

3. Generate innovative ideas using various creative thinking techniques (brainstorming, mind-mapping, combining divergent approaches, etc.)

Resources to Explore:

- **Intellectual Virtues Academy**, a middle school based in Long Beach, CA., is co-founded by Dr. Jason Baehr. Who has written an inspiring book on intellectual character for teachers and school leaders **(access the book here).**

- **Academy of Inquiry-based Learning** is a great source to learn about inquiry-based learning and its relationship to the intellectual character strengths.

- **Visible thinking**, an approach to learning developed by Professor Ron Ritchhart at Project Zero (based at Harvard), is also critical to learning more about intellectual character strengths.

- **Center for Character and Citizenship**, based at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, published Revitalizing Math Learning in America. The publication emphasizes the importance of K-8 students developing intellectual character.

CIVIC CHARACTER

Definition: Civic character is the character strengths of fairness, respect, volunteering and contributing to the common good.

Outcomes: All students demonstrating the virtues and habits to know the difference between what is fair or unfair, to respect the rule of law, to treat all people with respect, courtesy and dignity (especially individuals from different cultures, religions or ethnicities), to regularly volunteer and serve others, to contribute their time and talents to the common good for intrinsic reasons (their own sense of purpose, care and concern for others, etc.).

A. Know, understand and practice the character strengths of fairness, respect, volunteering and contributing to the common good

Grades K-2, ages 5-7

1. Understand why it is important to share, take turns, and follow rules (of a game, at home or school)

2. Explain why it is important for everyone to be respectful, courteous and polite

3. Explain what it means to follow the "Golden Rule"

4. Describe what it means to be a volunteer (at home, school, in the community)

Grades 3-5, ages 8-10

1. Understand the idea of fairness and the consequences of not being fair, as it relates to breaking rules, playing favorites, or taking advantage of others

2. Explain why there should be consequences for people who do not "play by the rules"

3. Understand why using profanity, insults, and gestures is being disrespectful

4. Explain why it is important for everyone to serve and contribute to their family, school, community, nation, globally

Grades 6-8, ages 11-13

1. Explain why it is important for all citizens to respect authority by following the rules and laws

2. Explain why friends have a responsibility to speak up or take action to prevent or stop others from engaging in disrespectful, dangerous, harmful, or illegal conduct

3. Explain how citizens can influence the democratic process (e.g., by voting)

4. Explain why protest and civil disobedience are essential to the democratic process

5. Explain what community service entails

6. Explain what the "common good" means and offer examples

Grades 9-12, ages 14-18+

1. Describe an unfair situation – at school, in the community, nationally, worldwide – and what can be done to create a more just remedy

2. Explain the difference between respect and obedience

3. Understand why respect is based on the premise that all people should be treated with dignity

4. Identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens embodied in the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights

5. Explain the difference between complaining and being committed to making a change

6. Explain why a particular local, regional, national or global issue or cause has personal relevance or meaning to you

7. Explain why it is important for all citizens to participate in the democratic process

B. Apply and demonstrate the character strengths of fairness, respect, volunteering and contributing to the common good

Grades K-2, ages 5-7

1. Demonstrate the ability to share, take turns and follow rules (of a game, at home or school)

2. Demonstrate the ability to be respectful, courteous and polite

3. Share with family, teachers and friends a time when the "Golden Rule" inspired you to change your behavior

4. Share with family, teachers and friends the ways in which you volunteer at home, school, and in the community

Grades 3-5, ages 8-10

1. Describe how a role model exemplifies fairness

2. Describe how a role model exemplifies respect

3. Explain how the school culture emphasizes/ reinforces fairness as a character strength

4. Explain how the school culture emphasizes/reinforces respect as a character strength

5. Share a time when you avoided being unfair by making a different decision

6. Describe how a role model volunteers and contributes to the common good

Grades 6-8, ages 11-13

1. Explain why some citizens do not respect authority or obey rules and laws

2. Describe how a role model challenged an unjust law

3. Share a time when you spoke up or took action to prevent friends from engaging in disrespectful, dangerous, harmful, or illegal conduct

4. Share a time when you spoke up or took action to encourage friends to be respectful

5. Create a portfolio of volunteer activities that includes what you learned from your service opportunities

6. Describe how a role model actively participates in the democratic process (either as an elected official or in another capacity)

CHARACTER & SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
MODEL STANDARDS

Grades 9-12, ages 14-18+

1. Explain a time when you displayed the courage to defend and stand up for an individual or a group of people being treated unfairly

2. Present evidence to demonstrate your ability to consistently treat all people with dignity

3. Document when you sacrificed your personal time to volunteer and serve others

4. Present evidence that explains how you sought to influence the democratic process by attending a public meeting on a particular issue, writing to a public representative, writing or educating others about a topic or issue you care deeply about

5. Describe a crucible moment when you realized you have to take responsibility, as a citizen, to strengthen the common good

Resources to Explore:

- **iCivics** is the nation's largest provider of civic education curriculum.

- **Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement** (CIRCLE), based at Tufts University, focuses on strategies to inspire K-12 students to participate in the democratic process.

- **Facing History and Ourselves** equips teachers with the tools and strategies to help students become thoughtful, responsible citizens.

- **Center for Civic Education** offers a wide range of programs for schools and communities.

Section 4

THE CSED MODEL STANDARDS (PART 2)

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Definition: Social-Emotional Development refers to the process through which individuals learn and apply a set of social, emotional, and behavioral skills required to succeed in school, in relationships, in the workplace, and as citizens. Ideally, social-emotional development engages families, schools, and communities working together to model and develop the skills our children need to understand and manage emotions, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.[6]

CHARACTER & SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
MODEL STANDARDS

[6]We are indebted to the groundbreaking theoretical and empirical research of the scholars and practitioners who founded and continue to contribute to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

SELF-AWARENESS

Definition: Self-awareness is the ability to recognize, understand, and express your own thoughts, emotions, mindsets, and personal strengths, including how emotions can affect thoughts and actions.

Outcomes: All students demonstrating the ability to understand and express their own feelings, to recognize how their feelings can impact others, and to identify and develop what makes them special (their personal strengths).

A. Recognize, understand and express your own thoughts, emotions, mindsets, and personal strengths, including how emotions can affect thoughts and actions

Grades K-2, ages 5-7

1. Identify and name different emotions (e.g., positive emotions, negative emotions, intense emotions)

2. Identify personal strengths (e.g., honesty, curiosity, listening)

3. Develop an emotional vocabulary to describe your feelings (e.g., anxious, bored, confident, confused, disappointed, embarrassed, excited, frustrated, hopeful, hurt, ignored, joyful, lonely, mad, proud, rejected, scared, worried)

4. Describe how your feelings influence and shape your thoughts and behaviors

Grades 3-5, ages 8-10

1. Understand and explain why different situations may set in motion or give rise to different emotions (e.g., learning something new or difficult, meeting someone new)

2. Recognize how your negative thoughts (e.g., "no one likes me") may distort or minimize the positive things about you (or around you)

3. Explain the ways in which you use and practice your personal strengths (e.g., your willingness to help others, your positivity)

4. Practice and apply "I feel" statements to express your emotions

Grades 6-8, ages 11-13

1. Describe how different thoughts, situations, and behaviors affect your feelings and emotions

2. Recognize your "stress moments" and why you feel anxious in these situations

3. Recognize the different physical cues that emerge during your reaction to negative emotions and stress (e.g., voice volume, tonal quality, shallow/rapid breathing, crossed arms, facial distortions, sweating)

4. Describe the techniques you use to challenge or refute your negative thoughts and feelings

5. Recognize the times when you exaggerate the severity or consequences of mistakes, embarrassing moments, failures, rejections and other negative events (e.g., "I can never face them again." "Everyone thinks I'm stupid.")

6. List and explain the different external supports you have used when feeling stressed or anxious (e.g., family, friends, teachers, neighbors)

7. Recognize situations that impair your judgment, make you unhappy, or lead you to engage in self-defeating, unhealthy, unethical or illegal conduct

Grades 9-12, ages 14-18+

1. Present research on how historical figures and media representations have inspired you to appreciate and practice positive emotions

2. Present an example of using your personal strengths to care and support others

3. Recognize how identifying your personal strengths helps to frame your immediate learning goals and future plans

4. Understand why negative thoughts and emotions may result in harmful behaviors (e.g., substance abuse, insomnia, social withdrawal, depression, socially inappropriate displays of emotions, bullying, risk-taking behaviors)

5. Explain to someone who looks up to you your support system when feeling stressed or anxious (e.g., family, friends, an adult at school, youth pastor, a community agency)

Resources to Explore:

- **Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation** at Georgetown University has created a cluster of ideas and teaching strategies that focus on teaching children about emotions.

- **Values in Action Institute** has developed a free survey that enables middle and high school students to identify their character strengths.

- **Child Mind Institute** is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to transforming the lives of children and families struggling with mental health and learning disorders.

- **Relationships First**, a program created by Search Institute, is designed to foster connections (among peers and adults) that help young people thrive.

CHARACTER & SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
MODEL STANDARDS

SELF-MANAGEMENT

Definition: Self-management is the ability to consistently manage and regulate your impulses, emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations.

Outcomes: All students demonstrating the ability to regulate the butterflies they get in their stomachs before reading in front of the class, to manage the anxiety, frustration, fear, or anger they may experience with friends, to develop a "growth mindset" rather than defaulting to current likes or dislikes, to recognize there are people they can talk to when they need help or support.

A. Practice and demonstrate the ability to manage your impulses, emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations

Grades K-2, ages 5-7

1. Demonstrate the ability to regulate your impulses (e.g., how to appropriately communicate your wants/needs, how to wait for something you want, how to use a hand signal)

2. Recognize how to express your emotions accurately and how to appropriately express your needs related to those feelings

3. Explain the different ways people respond to problems and challenges (e.g., ask for help, try harder, learn from mistakes)

4. Describe and practice communicating effective verbal and non-verbal messages (e.g., saying thank-you, waving goodbye to a friend)

Grades 3-5, ages 8-10

1. Identify and develop a range of self-help and stress-reducing coping strategies (e.g., positive self-talk, deep breaths, taking a break, talking to someone about your feelings)

2. Demonstrate the ability to "predict" outcomes across a range of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors and actions (e.g., saying hello to a teacher, studying for a test, fighting on the playground)

3. Identify people, places and resources who can help you when you are having difficulty managing your thoughts and emotions (e.g., parents, family members, teachers)

4. Explain what it means to have either a "fixed" or "growth" mindset

Grades 6-8, ages 11-13

1. Explain one technique you use to stay confident in stressful or challenging situations (e.g. positive self-talk)

2. Recognize how social media affects your thoughts, emotions, and behaviors

3. Explain how you practice "self-care" (e.g., meditation, listening to music, hobby)

4. Explain a time when you overcame a negative thought and developed a "growth mindset"

Grades 9-12, ages 14-18+

1. Present evidence on the most effective ways people maintain confidence by managing their emotions, stress, and negative thoughts

2. Research and document how a historical figure overcame anxiety and depression by learning how to manage his or her negative thoughts and emotions

3. Share with a younger person who looks up to you about a time when you failed at something (or were disappointed about an outcome) and the strategies you used to manage your negative thoughts, feelings, and emotions

4. Present evidence on the ways in which social media can negatively impact a person's confidence and well-being

5. Explain how all forms of media can (positively or negatively) influence beliefs and behaviors

6. Explain a time when you encouraged someone to change their "fixed" mindset to a "growth" mindset

7. Write about a supportive adult you talked to during a time of needed support

Resources to Explore:

- **Handbook of Social and Emotional Learning** by Durlak, Domitrovich, Weissberg and Gullotta is an invaluable and comprehensive resource.

- Ethan Kross is a leading researcher on how **positive self-talk** can help young people overcome negative thoughts.

- Carol Dweck's **website** is still the "go-to" source for the latest research on fostering a "growth mindset" in children.

- **Common Sense Education** published a ground-breaking report on strategies to help young people navigate social media by using their social-emotional skills.

SOCIAL-AWARENESS

Definition: Social-awareness is the ability to empathize and take the perspective of others, including demonstrating awareness of cultural differences and respect for human dignity.

Outcomes: All students demonstrating the ability to put themselves in another person's shoes, to appreciate differences (in people, cultures, traditions), to treat everyone the way they would like to be treated.

A. Demonstrate the ability to empathize and take the perspective of others, including demonstrating awareness of cultural differences and respect for human dignity

Grades K-2, ages 5-7

1. Demonstrate the ability to understand what another person is feeling (e.g., happy, sad, disappointed, confused, angry)

2. Demonstrate the ability to care about how others are feeling

3. Demonstrate the ability to listen carefully and intentionally to others

4. Describe ways in which people are similar and different

5. Use respectful language and actions when dealing with conflict or a difference of opinion

6. Be able to tell stories and listen to stories told by others

Grades 3-5, ages 8-10

1. Use "I-statements" to let others know that you have heard them

2. Describe how a person will likely feel when being bullied or left out of an activity or group

3. Recognize examples of stereotyping, discrimination and prejudice

4. Explain a time when you put yourself in "someone else's shoes" in order to understand their perspective and point of view

5. Explain what empathy means (e.g., the ability to sympathetically understand and personally identify with the emotional states, needs and feelings of others)

Grades 6-8, ages 11-13

1. Experience and demonstrate empathy

2. Explain a time when you were able to console, comfort, calm, support and encourage someone

3. Demonstrate respect for other people's opinions and perspectives

4. Analyze the impact of stereotyping, discrimination, and prejudice (at school, in the community and beyond)

5. Practice "perspective taking" as a strategy to strengthen your acceptance of others

6. Demonstrate awareness and understanding that despite differences, all people have similar needs, feelings and wants

Grades 9-12, ages 14-18+

1. Explain the concept of "human dignity"

2. Research and understand the origins and negative effects of stereotyping and prejudice

3. Participate in cross-cultural activities that celebrated diversity and write about how this experience contributed to your personal growth

4. Document a time when you began to acknowledge and identify with the experiences, feelings, and viewpoints of a person or persons different than you

5. Explain a time when you resisted stereotyping

6. Explain to someone who looks up to you a time you provided comfort or relief to another person in duress (and how you supported this person)

Resources to Explore:

- **Making Caring Common**, a project based at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, has a number of publications and resources that focus on developing empathy in children.

- The publication Preparing Youth to Thrive has a great section on helping students become **active listeners.**

- **Center for Restorative Process** has pertinent information on conflict resolution strategies and restorative circles in schools.

- **Teaching Tolerance** has been an invaluable resource for teachers and schools since 1991.

INTERPERSONAL/RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

Definition: Interpersonal and relationship skills is the ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups, to communicate clearly, actively listen, collaborate and cooperate, manage conflict constructively, seek and offer help when needed, and resist inappropriate peer pressure.

Outcomes: All students demonstrating the ability to have friends and be a good friend, to actively listen, to be a great teammate, to help others in need, to seek support when they need help or support, to stand up and say "no" and still keep their friends.

A. *Demonstrate the ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups, to communicate clearly, actively listen, collaborate and cooperate, manage conflict constructively, seek and offer help when needed, and resist inappropriate peer pressure*

Grades K-2, ages 5-7

1. Initiate and engage in conversation and social interactions with classmates, peers, and adults

2. Understand the importance of sharing

3. Understand and respect someone's personal space

4. Identify and practice appropriate behaviors to maintain positive relationships (e.g., sharing, helping, saying something nice)

5. Recognize and practice the skills to prevent, manage, and constructively resolve interpersonal conflicts (e.g., cool off, affirm, forgive, thank)

6. Learn to resolve conflicts without hitting, throwing a tantrum, or using hurtful language

7. Play games and appropriately participate in small group classroom activities

Grades 3-5, ages 8-10

1. Describe how words, voice tone, and body language can impact relationships positively or negatively

2. Recognize the needs of others and how those needs may differ from your own

3. Understand and recognize the characteristics of healthy relationships (e.g., honesty, compromising, sharing, encouragement)

4. Understand and recognize the characteristics of unhealthy relationships (e.g., hostility, intimidation, hitting)

5. Identify a problem in a relationship and seek appropriate assistance from an adult

6. Recognize and respect the boundaries of others (e.g., material, physical, mental, and emotional boundaries)

7. Give and receive constructive feedback to classmates and peers

8. Understand and recognize the positive and negative impact of peer pressure on self and others

9. Recognize and communicate to a trusted adult, any harmful individual and group behaviors

Grades 6-8, ages 11-13

1. Recognize and monitor how your facial expressions, body language, and tone impact your interactions with others

2. Recognize barriers to effective listening (e.g., environmental distractions, message problems, sender or receiver problems)

3. Identify appropriate and inappropriate uses of social media and the implications for maintaining positive relationships

4. Understand and recognize the differences between face-to-face communication and social media interactions

5. Understand and practice positive collaboration and cooperation skills (e.g., teamwork)

6. Take a proactive role to resolve conflict between friends or group members (e.g., stay calm, listen to all sides, be open to different solutions)

7. Engage in advocacy and/or refusal skills during times of bullying, harassment, intimidation, or abusive behavior

8. Respond in a healthy manner to peer-pressure against yourself or others

Grades 9-12, ages 14-18+

1. Understand and demonstrate commitment and loyalty to a particular group (e.g., sports team, debate team, robotics team, dance team)

2. Make significant contributions to a project team that has been challenged to produce original work

3. Understand and explain the potential impact of social media on reputation and relationships

4. Document and provide evidence of a time when you used conflict resolution skills to diffuse a situation

5. Explain to someone who looks up to you the consequences of risky behaviors (e.g., either individual and group behaviors)

6. Practice refusal skills and respond proactively when you become aware of unhealthy behaviors and relationships

7. Understand why it is important to cultivate and nurture relationships in the context of networks and career development

Resources to Explore:

- **Handbook of Prosocial Education** by Philip Brown, Michael Corrigan, and Ann Higgins-D'Allessandro is a comprehensive resource that examines a range of approaches and programs that promote and teach responsibility and a sense of connectedness and common purpose.

- Association of Middle Level Education has a great publication titled **The Power of Positive Relationships.**

- Robert Slavin has written a primer on **cooperative learning** for ASCD.

- National Bureau of Economic Research recently published a ground-breaking article on the power of "social image" during adolescence titled **Cool to be Smart or Smart to be Cool: Understanding Peer Pressure in Education.**

- **KidsHealth** has developed a set of classroom activities to help middle school students recognize and respond to positive and negative peer pressure.

RESPONSIBLE AND ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING

Definition: Responsibility and ethical decision-making is the ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical principles, safety concerns, appropriate social norms, respect for self and others, and the likely consequence of your decision.

Outcomes: All students demonstrating the ability to make decisions based on their own values and principles rather than succumbing to risk-taking impulses, peer-pressure, or the failure to anticipate the consequences of their choices.

A. Demonstrate the ability to make decisions based on consideration of ethical principles, safety concerns, appropriate social norms, respect for self and others, and the likely consequences of your actions

Grades K-2, ages 5-7

1. Describe a rule or principle that everyone should strive to live by (e.g., be kind, be honest, try your best)

2. Understand the difference between what is safe and not safe (e.g., touching a hot stove, skateboarding without a helmet)

3. Explain one "social norm" at school and the reason for the norm (e.g., do not litter, no running in the hallways)

4. Understand "if/then" thinking (e.g., "If I do x, then y will likely occur")

5. Explain a time when you were given the responsibility to make your own decision after considering the "pros and cons" of different options

Grades 3-5, ages 8-10

1. Write and share with your classmates an ethical principle you wish everyone in the world would follow all the time (e.g., all people are created equal, be honest, be kind)

2. Recognize, compare and contrast safe and unsafe situations

3. Learn and practice a "formula" for making good decisions (stop, calm down, identify the dilemma or problem, compare options while considering ethical principles, safety, social norms, respect for self and others, make a decision, reflect on the consequences)

4. Explain why there needs to be consequences for inappropriate behaviors

Grades 6-8, ages 11-13

1. Understand and practice the three steps of the "PTI Decision-making Tree" (e.g., Principle first; Team/Group second, Individual third)

2. Research and explain the pressures some people experience that result in them cheating, lying, experimenting with drugs or alcohol

3. Write about and share a principle you want to live by that you learned from a family member, book, movie, or personal experience

4. Describe a time when you made a poor decision and what you learned

5. Identify and explain how responsible and ethical decision-making affects your short-term and long-term goals

Grades 9-12, ages 14-18+

1. Write down and share with others five (5) Core Ethical Principles you want to live by (and be held accountable for)

2. Demonstrate a time when you made a decision based on an ethical principle, rather than prioritizing yourself or your relationship with friends

3. Evaluate peer and social situations that are safe or unsafe

4. Demonstrate how you upheld and defended a "social norm" that someone in your friend group consistently ignores or violates

5. Research and explain why people know what is "the right thing" to do, but instead they freeze and make a different decision (e.g., what researchers call the "Decision-Action Gap")

6. Demonstrate a time when you took the time to reflect on an important decision and what decision-making skills you need to improve as a result of your self-assessment

7. Explain to someone who looks up to you how you would respond if: (1) you learned a friend was going to cheat on a test; (2) you were in a store and saw a friend shoplifting; (3) your friend asks you to lie for him or her

Resources to Explore:

- The non-profit organization **CITRS** developed the PTI concept (principles first, your team/group second, yourself third).

- The non-profit organization UNDERSTOOD has written a wonderful description of why some kids do not always understand the **unwritten social norms** of a school.

- ACT for Youth (Assets Coming Together), a partnership between Cornell University and the Division of Adolescent Medicine at the University of Rochester, has written a publication on **responsible decision-making** during adolescence.

- **Ethics Institute**, based at the Kent Place School, provides resources to elementary and secondary schools on the process and practice of ethical decision-making.

Section 5:

CONNECTING CHARACTER AND SEL DEVELOPMENT IN OUR CLASSROOMS AND SCHOOLS

All educators need to provide opportunities for students to understand and express their own feelings, manage their anxiety or frustration, empathize and take the perspective of others, establish and maintain healthy relationships, and make responsible and ethical decisions.

But toward what end or goal?

We believe the SEL skills enable and support a young person's determination and commitment to be a person of character. The SEL skills help students consistently be honest and trustworthy, caring and compassionate, self-disciplined, intellectually curious, fair, and respectful.

The CSED Model Standards reinforce research that demonstrates how character and social-emotional development increases academic achievement. More specifically, the indicators emphasize the skills associated with performance character (self-discipline, responsibility, goal setting, and grit) and intellectual character (curiosity, carefulness, intellectual autonomy and humility, open-mindedness, and critical thinking).

The CSED Model Standards also provide opportunities for students to practice, engage, and reflect on their SEL skills and character strengths. The indicators undergirding the CSED Model Standards accentuate how the SEL skills and character strengths require "thinking, feeling, and doing." The indicators also enable teachers to assess the extent to which students are motivated by intrinsic reasons to practice and model the SEL skills and character strengths.

Finally, the CSED Model Standards provide school leaders with a "unifying vehicle" that will bring the staff together toward a shared goal and purpose: supporting students as they strive to become young people of character who will flourish in school, in relationships, in the workplace, and as citizens.

Clifton Taulbert is a member of Character.org's Advisory Council. He received the Sanford N. McDonnell Lifetime Achievement Award from Character.org in 2019.

Section 7:

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CHARACTER & SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
MODEL STANDARDS