

# CHARACTER EDUCATION

ADOPTION EFFECTIVE  
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IDAHO STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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## Position Statement

Character Education is the deliberate effort to help people understand, care about, and act upon core values such as respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, self-discipline, caring and fairness. It seeks to provide students with repeated, real-life experiences at home, at school and in the community. It holds all school members—staff and students alike—accountable to standards of conduct consistent with the school’s professed core values.

A strong emphasis is placed on embedding character-building experiences in all phases of school life, including the formal curriculum and culture of the school. Schools are encouraged to revise their existing curricula by creating opportunities throughout all disciplines for teaching values and character. Responding to teachable ethical moments that spontaneously arise throughout the school day and year is also essential.

In addition to defining values in terms of observable behavior, modeling them at every opportunity is critical. A major focus of character education is applying core values to everyday life.

Idaho schools are encouraged to work with their parents and community members to select, define and apply their core values. Partnering with parents and other community stakeholders in the entire character education effort is essential to fostering an ethical society as well as civil and caring communities.

Differences in identified core values from community to community dictate that school districts carefully study materials they are considering for purchase. School districts are encouraged to select materials that enhance their existing curriculum rather than create “add-on” programs.

(Note: Idaho’s character education project utilizes Tom Lickona’s *Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education* and his work is inherent in the above position statement.)