



CharacterPlus®

KANSAS CITY PARTNERSHIP GUIDE

2026-2027



CharacterPlus

Shaping Character for Academic and Personal Success

In today's rapidly changing world, academic success alone is not enough. Our students need more than knowledge—they need character. At CharacterPlus, we believe that the heart of education lies in shaping students who are not only well-informed but also well-grounded, responsible, and resilient. That's why we are dedicated to helping schools develop positive learning environments where character development is woven into the very fabric of the school culture.

Our History

Founded in 1988 by Sanford (Sandy) N. McDonnell, Chairman Emeritus of the McDonnell Douglas Corporation, and a small group of dedicated superintendents, CharacterPlus is now the longest-running and largest community-wide character education initiative in the country.

CharacterPlus also oversees Character.org's prestigious National Schools of Character program and the 11 Principles framework used in schools throughout the world.

What We Do

With decades of experience partnering with schools, we empower educators with evidence-based practices, character-based leadership development, and tailored support that foster strong, ethical, and thriving school communities.

Our approach is research-informed, strengths-based, and values-centered. We work hand-in-hand with schools to support whole-child development, because we know that students learn best when they feel safe, valued, and inspired.

Our committed school partners report:

Improved Attendance

Lower Discipline Referral Rates

Higher Standardized Test Scores

Climate Surveys Reporting Greater

Connectedness

5% Higher ACT Scores

Renewed Teacher Sense of Purpose

Increased Sense of School Community

Join the Newest CharacterPlus Partnership in Kansas City

We believe in the power of education rooted in character and belonging — and we're excited to partner with Kansas City schools and districts ready to lead that movement.

Let's Create Schools Where Character Leads and Every Student Belongs

This is your opportunity to cultivate a culture of excellence and be recognized for it. As a CharacterPlus Partner, your school or district will gain access to a powerful suite of tools, training, and personalized support designed to help you:

ELEVATE character, leadership, and school culture

IMPLEMENT proven, evidence-based strategies that build a caring, high-achieving environment

USE data to drive real change through climate and culture assessments

PURSUE recognition as a Missouri and National School of Character

Partnership Packages for a School or District

Kansas City Partnership Price: **\$1,750**

HERE'S WHAT'S INCLUDED:

One Free Academy Seat: Includes enrollment in TACE, SELf, or CACE (additional seats available at a reduced partnership rate).

Expert Consulting: Three hours of dedicated, professional guidance for your team.

C2 Audit: A comprehensive evaluation of your school's current climate and culture.

Collaborative Workshops: Access to Partnership Leader Meetings designed for innovation and shared learning.

iCharacterPlus Access: Full, free entry to our digital programming hub.

Reduced Pricing: Preferred partnership rates on all additional CharacterPlus programming.

Customized Professional Development: Your choice of one on-site customized training or one additional free seat in a CharacterPlus Academy.

Questions?

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus Kansas City at drusert@characterplus.org.



CharacterPlus

5%

Increase CharacterPlus partner schools reflect on state standards and ACT testing

20%

Of State and National Schools of Character our CharacterPlus region represents nationally

80+

Number of CharacterPlus partner school districts, organizations, and universities

200+

Number of donating companies, individuals, and foundations to help keep partnership fees low

500+

Number of regional educators participating in online workshop platform iCharacterPlus

700+

Number of regional and statewide schools included in CharacterPlus partnership character education work

Impacted Partners

“The Teacher Academy in Character Education helps put character at the forefront of educating students...the professional development is highly collaborative and something I can use immediately in the classroom.”

Natasha Payne

*Roosevelt High, SLPS Math Teacher of the Year,
TACE Graduate*

“Putting character education at the center of a school's purpose is the most rewarding thing to do for student success.”

Dr. Ketina Schaffer Armstrong

*Assistant Superintendent, Teaching & Learning,
MVR-III School District*

“It was incredibly energizing to be around educators who are SO invested in character education and working with children!!...thank you very much for your work and for sharing your expertise! Yesterday was the BEST professional development I've experienced in years!!!”

Lindsey Corsale

*Mason Ridge Elementary, Parkway Elementary Teacher
of the Year, TACE Graduate*

“The CharacterPlus staff who were leading TACE were doing an excellent job. The educators were all so engaged, and the atmosphere was supportive and encouraging. It really gave me great insight into the work that CharacterPlus is doing and how it affects real, meaningful change when those educators bring what they learn back to their schools.”

Rory O'Sullivan, J.D.

*CharacterPlus Board of Directors, Acting County
Counselor, St. Charles County, MO*

“As our expert in character education leadership, thank you for the safety of being vulnerable and sharing wins and struggles because that's the type of environment that fosters growth. Students are happy, and staff are happy. I'm super grateful, with eyes full of tears and a heart full of gratitude. Thank you!”

Keri Szymanski

*Principal, Voices West Contra Costa
Richmond, CA*

The Team

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Heather Nadenbush

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Diana Dodson

Character.Org Promising Practices Coordinator, Retired school counselor and program administrator, MA in Digital Communication, ED.S in Learning Technologies, diana@character.org

Kansas City Academies

Teacher Academy in Character
Education (TACE)

SELF Academy

Counseling Academy in Character
Education (CACE)

Special Program:
Champions of Character

CHARACTER GOES THE DISTANCE

IMPACT

Expertly equip your future teacher leaders

Lead with an inter-intrapersonal foundation

A community of wellness for mental health professionals

Schools dedicated to service learning

Kansas City Academies

Teacher Academy in Character Education (TACE)

SELF Academy

Counseling Academy in Character Education (CACE)

Special Program:
Champions of Character

CHARACTER GOES THE DISTANCE

INTENTION

To equip teachers with the knowledge, experiences, and tools to build positive character and culture in their classrooms and school communities.

OVERVIEW

TACE is a yearlong cohort led by experts in Character Development. It will include the following topics: Character Education History & Frameworks; The ABCs of Character (Autonomy, Belonging, Competence); Foundations Of A Classroom Of Character (class meetings, classroom norms and core values); Character Development In Students (intrinsic motivation, character traits, goal setting, reflection); Character Education Curriculum Integration (service learning, instructional strategies)

OUTCOME

To increase academic student success, decrease referrals, reduce teacher turnover, and increase job satisfaction

TO START

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus Kansas City, at drusert@characterplus.org to learn more.



TACE

TEACHER
ACADEMY IN
CHARACTER
EDUCATION

IDEAL FOR
TEACHER LEADERS
WHO ARE:

PASSIONATE about
shaping not just minds,
but character.

COMMITTED to
modeling integrity
empathy, and respect in
every interaction.

OPEN TO GROWTH and
seek practical strategies
to build positive
classroom culture and
inspire students to lead
with strong values.

Transform Your Classroom with the Teacher Academy in Character Education

The Teacher Academy in Character Education (TACE) is a year-long cohort designed for early childhood, elementary, and secondary teachers. Led by top educators and character education experts, the academy empowers teachers with the tools they need to transform their classrooms into collaborative learning communities where every student is challenged academically and feels a true sense of value.

Curriculum & Core Topics

The program covers foundational frameworks and practical classroom strategies, including:

Character Education History & Frameworks: Understanding the critical "why" behind character development.

The ABCs of Character: Focusing on fostering Autonomy, Belonging, and Competence.

Classroom Foundations: Implementing class meetings, classroom norms, and core values.

Student Development: Cultivating intrinsic motivation, specific character traits, goal setting, and reflection.

Character Education Curriculum Integration: Practical instructional strategies and service learning.

**Teachers who have completed
the academy report significant
shifts in their professional lives
and student engagement.**

“

This academy has helped my students' engagement in the classroom go through the roof.”

Emilee Madlinger,
North Kirkwood Middle School

Questions?

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus
Kansas City at drusert@characterplus.org.



REGISTER

CharacterPlus

Kansas City Academies

Teacher Academy in Character Education (TACE)

SELF Academy

Counseling Academy in Character Education (CACE)

Special Program:
Champions of Character

CHARACTER GOES THE DISTANCE

INTENTION

To help leaders understand that effective leadership is an essential factor in ensuring all members of a school community achieve at their highest potential. Leaders who humbly seek to understand themselves first are able to intentionally create a culture where their community members thrive.

OVERVIEW

Participants will engage in a variety of leadership experiences that will result in creating a new cultural foundation for their school. Participants will be ready to apply and integrate relevant inter and intrapersonal learning and practical applications into their schools to qualitatively make a positive impact on all stakeholders.

OUTCOME

Participants will develop the capacity to be their best self in order to create thriving school communities. They will build an awareness of the power of capacity mapping, future planning, and inter-intrapersonal skills in order to affect change. They will bridge the gap between awareness and intentionality into action by cultivating a culture of character and connect learning to evidence-based character and inter-intrapersonal skill frameworks.

TO START

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus Kansas City, at drusert@characterplus.org to learn more.



SELF

SOCIAL
EMOTIONAL
LEADERSHIP
FOUNDATIONS

IDEAL FOR:

*Superintendent & Assistant
Superintendent*

Principal & Director

*SEL Program Coordinator
& Counselor*

Core Learning Frameworks:

ABCD Foundations: Internalizing
Autonomy, Belonging,
Competence, and Dignity.

Evidence-Based Practice:
Connecting learning to inter-
and intrapersonal skill-building
frameworks.

Change Management:
Embracing the ability to lead
change effectively by
understanding self and others.

Leading from the Inside Out

Informed by research in adult learning theory and combined with inter and intrapersonal and character principles, SELF is a transformative experience designed for leaders who recognize that effective leadership begins with self-awareness. By understanding ourselves first, we can intentionally create a school culture where every member of the community has the opportunity to thrive.

Program Details

Intention: To help leaders understand that effective leadership starts with the self. Participants will bridge the gap between awareness and intentionality into action by cultivating a culture of character.

Overview: Informed by research in adult learning theory and combined with Inter/Intrapersonal and Character principles, participants will engage in a variety of leadership experiences. The program focuses on internalizing Autonomy, Belonging, Competence, and Dignity (ABCD) to understand their impact on creating thriving school communities.

Outcome: Participants will develop the capacity to be their best self in order to serve their students, school, and community. They will build an awareness of the power of capacity mapping, future planning, and inter-intrapersonal skills in order to affect change and lead effectively.

“

I come in feeling disconnected and always leave feeling empowered. The activities have a clear purpose and lead to such great dialogue. I wish every educator and student could experience SELF!"

Self Participant

Questions?

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Kansas City at drusert@characterplus.org.



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Kansas City Academies

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Special Program:
Champions of Character

CHARACTER GOES THE DISTANCE

INTENTION

The Counseling Academy in Character Education (CACE) is designed to be a supportive community for those who work to meet the social, emotional, and mental health needs of young people in schools and other settings. Social workers, counselors, and other mental health professionals will build a support network as they rekindle their passion for this work and form a wellness community.

OVERVIEW

Counselors, social workers, and other mental health professionals who support students and adults in schools and other settings are often overlooked for development specific to their needs. CACE is specifically intended to help these caregivers by intentionally focusing on rediscovering why this work is important to who they are. Our time together will also concentrate on self-awareness, trust, communication, and self-care.

OUTCOME

Outcomes will include a clearer focus on participants' work directly connected to their personal wy. They will also improve their skills to establish trust and communicate not only with those they serve, but also with the other adults who are a part of their community of support. Finally, this collective professional learning network will develop individualized definitions of self-care with intentional strategies for activities to recharge.

TO START

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus Kansas City, at drusert@characterplus.org to learn more.



THE CACE MISSION

Character Education Skill-Building For Mental Health Professionals

Counselors, social workers, and other mental health professionals who support students and adults are often overlooked for development specific to their unique needs. The Counseling Academy in Character Education (CACE) is designed to be a supportive community for those who work to meet the social, emotional, and mental health needs of young people in schools and other settings. This academy helps these essential caregivers rediscover why this work is important to who they are, intentionally focusing on self-awareness, trust, communication, and self-care.



To equip social workers, counselors, and mental health providers with knowledge, experiences, and tools to rekindle their passion and commitment to themselves and those they serve."

Program Details

Intention: To build a supportive community of wellness for mental health professionals that allows them to rekindle their passion for their work while forming a strong professional network.

Overview: This academy provides character education skill-building specifically for mental health professionals. It is designed to help participants embrace the power of self-awareness, rediscover their "why," sharpen communication skills, and uncover strategies to rekindle their self-care.

Outcome: Participants will develop a clearer focus on their work directly connected to their personal "why". They will improve their skills to establish trust and communicate with those they serve and their community of support, ultimately developing individualized definitions of self-care with intentional strategies to recharge.

A NOTE ON PARTICIPATION

Sessions include lunch. Partner districts receive a discounted academy fee.



Questions?

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Kansas City at drusert@characterplus.org.



CharacterPlus



CHAMPIONS FOR Character

SERVICE LEARNING RECOGNITION

PAST CHAMPIONS

The Power of Service Learning

The Champions for Character Service Learning recognition program is designed to increase awareness of the benefits of service learning and encourage schools to move from one-time service projects to more long-term, schoolwide service learning. Champions for Character raises awareness about the value of schoolwide Service Learning, recognizing schools that serve as outstanding examples of implementation. The program honors schools in the metro area that have developed a schoolwide ethos of service learning that is infused in the curriculum and includes student voice and reflection.

Kentucky Trails
Elementary | Belton
School District

EPIC Elementary | Liberty
Public Schools

Program Details

Intention: To raise awareness about the value of schoolwide Service Learning and recognize schools for their outstanding examples of service learning implementation.

Overview: Celebrating school service projects that develop long-term, schoolwide service learning ethos. The program honors schools in the greater Kansas City area where service learning is infused in the curriculum and includes student voice and reflection.

Outcome: Recognized schools are honored with tickets to a Kansas City Royals game for members of their school community and a professional banner for their building.



Questions?

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Kansas City at drusert@characterplus.org.



REGISTER

CharacterPlus

Explore Our Other Programs

Athleadership Academy in Character Education (AACE)

At The Table

Character-Based Discipline

CharacterPlus Way

Character Visions

Character Survey

C2 Audit

Culture Carriers

District or School Consulting

iCharacterPlus

Professional Academy in Character Excellence (PACE)

Schools of Character Academy (SOCA)

Schools of Character (SOC)
Applications Support

CHARACTER GOES THE DISTANCE

IMPACT

Character-focused athletes and coaches

Affirm women educators' noble purpose

Student discipline conducted with dignity

School climate, culture, and academic excellence

Middle school character education curriculum

An expert opinion for your building

Culture and climate measurement

Character-equipped educators beyond the classroom

Access to thought leaders in Character Education and School Climate

Character workshops and resources at the ready

Build purpose, accountability, character, and excellence as the foundation for personal and organizational success.

School onramp for creating a school-wide positive character-based operating system

Equip yourself to confidently lead the process

Explore Our Other Programs

Athleadership Academy in Character Education (AACE)

At The Table

Character-Based Discipline

CharacterPlus Way

Character Visions

Character Survey

C2 Audit

Culture Carriers

District or School Consulting

iCharacterPlus

Professional Academy in Character
Excellence (PACE)

Schools of Character Academy (SOCA)

Schools of Character (SOC)
Applications Support

CHARACTER GOES THE DISTANCE

INTENTION

CharacterPlus has adapted its ABCs process for creating Autonomy (voice and choice), Belonging (being a valued part of a community), and Competence (the ability to do something successfully) for high school coaches and their athletes. Athleaders from each school will become aware of and hone their own virtue and character strengths and leadership potential to help their team thrive and succeed.

OVERVIEW

The Athleadership Academy in Character Education (AACE) provides character education skill-building for high school athletes. Annually, each participating high school selects two student-athletes from every sport to attend AACE training, allowing them to become Athleaders.

OUTCOME

Athletes and coaches gain an awareness of the relationship hurdles impeding high performance team culture. Participant athletes reflect the personal commitment outcomes we at CharacterPlus love to see - athletes feeling valued (free of bias), team culture where everyone belongs (welcomed regardless), and empowering leadership (voices heard, ideas appreciated).

TO START

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus Kansas City, at drusert@characterplus.org to learn more.



AACE

ATHLEADERSHIP
ACADEMY IN
CHARACTER
EDUCATION

WHAT OUR PARTICIPANTS SAY

Character Goes the Distance

The High School Athleadership Academy in Character Education (AACE) provides specialized character education skill-building for secondary school athletes. By adapting its K-12 evidence-based process specifically for high school coaches and their athletes, CharacterPlus helps teams move beyond the default "transactional" coaching style to become truly transformational.

In the competitive world of sports, we believe that who an athlete is matters just as much as how they play. This program focuses on creating Autonomy (voice and choice), Belonging (being part of a community), and Competence (the ability to do something successfully) on and off the field. Annually, each participating high school selects student-athletes from every sport to attend AACE training in order to become AACE Character Ambassadors.

Program Details

Intention: To adapt the evidence-based ABCs process for creating Autonomy (voice and choice), Belonging (being a valued part of a community), and Competence (the ability to do something successfully) for high school athletic environments.

Overview: Each participating high school selects student-athletes from every sport to attend AACE training and become Character Ambassadors. These "Athleaders" hone their leadership potential and personal virtue to help their teams thrive.

Outcome: Athletes and coaches gain awareness of relationship hurdles impeding high performance. Outcomes include stronger social and emotional skills, and a team culture where every athlete's voice is heard and appreciated.

“

We are a more unified family.”

“

This gives coaches the opportunity to work on being a *transformational versus a transactional coach*, which is often the default.”

“

We cannot wait to continue our meetings as *AACE character ambassadors*.”

“

We are creating competitive and passionate athletes who also have *extraordinary character* on and off the field.”

Questions?

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus
Kansas City at drusert@characterplus.org.



REGISTER

CharacterPlus

Explore Our Other Programs

Athleadership Academy in Character Education (AACE)

At The Table

Character-Based Discipline

CharacterPlus Way

Character Visions

Character Survey

C2 Audit

Culture Carriers

District or School Consulting

iCharacterPlus

Professional Academy in Character Excellence (PACE)

Schools of Character Academy (SOCA)

Schools of Character (SOC)
Applications Support

CHARACTER GOES THE DISTANCE

INTENTION

Designed for trailblazing women administrators, CharacterPlus has assembled a selection of the region's most notable and successful businesswomen and social change leaders who have lived their noble purpose with character as their foundation.

OVERVIEW

A series of four evenings where participants grow their Professional Learning Network (PLN) over appetizers, dinner, and heartening messages of breaking barriers through leadership and courage.

OUTCOME

Participants will be inspired to walk in their noble purpose and lead with character, extending their thinking around the power of being a woman who leads with purpose to impact those they serve.

TO START

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus Kansas City, at drusert@characterplus.org to learn more.



AT THE Table

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Leading with Purpose

Evening gatherings designed to empower and inspire trailblazing women educators as noble women leaders share how positive character anchors a purpose-driven life. This series provides a unique space for women administrators to connect and grow alongside notable business and social change leaders from across the region.

Program Details

As an At The Table participant, you will grow your PLN and extend your own thinking around the power of being a woman who leads with purpose to impact those you serve. Each evening will be centered around the message from an influential woman leader who will share her story of the power of leading with and on purpose.

PREVIOUS SPEAKERS INCLUDE

Michelle Li

Cohost of "Today in St. Louis,"
KSDK Channel 5

Amy Shaw

President & CEO, Nine PBS

Jey Owens, MBA

Director, Human Resources,
Champaign Unit 4 Schools

Justine Froelker, M.Ed., LPC

Bestselling Author &
National Trainer

Dr. Joyce Balls-Berry

Professor, Neurology, Wash U
School of Medicine

Dr. Akberet Boykin-Farr

VP, Diversity & Social
Responsibility, Emerson

Dr. Donna Jahnke

Assistant Professor, SLU

Geri Boyer, P.E.

Managing Partner, Kaskaskia
Engineering

Judi Bertels

CEO, African Vision of Hope



Questions?

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REGISTER

CharacterPlus

Explore Our Other Programs

Athleadership Academy in Character Education (AACE)

At The Table

Character-Based Discipline

CharacterPlus Way

Character Visions

Character Survey

C2 Audit

Culture Carriers

District or School Consulting

iCharacterPlus

Professional Academy in Character Excellence (PACE)

Schools of Character Academy (SOCA)

Schools of Character (SOC)
Applications Support

CHARACTER GOES THE DISTANCE

INTENTION

Protecting student dignity while practicing evidence-based approaches designed for a long-term goal of self-directed, self-regulated, and responsible student behavior.

OVERVIEW

This session explores the neuroscience behind all human behavior, and unpacks the essential elements that students need to be their best selves. Regardless of the discipline program your school uses, this academy will enhance your practice by increasing your understanding of proactive research-based strategies.

OUTCOME

Learn to apply proactive strategies to improve relationships during-incident strategies to promote self-regulation, and post-incident strategies to encourage reason and repair.

TO START

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus Kansas City, at drusert@characterplus.org to learn more.



Character-Based DISCIPLINE

LEARN TO APPLY

Understanding the Heart of Behavior

Humans learn and process through social interactions, and our behaviors are heavily influenced by our experiences with others. This academy explores the neuroscience behind human behavior and unpacks the essential elements that students need to be their best selves. Regardless of the discipline program your school currently uses, this session will enhance your practice by increasing your understanding of proactive, research-based implementation strategies. We focus on the "before, during, and after" of behavior challenges to ensure long-term growth for both students and staff.

Discipline that is structured while maintaining the dignity of both the student and staff member.

Proactive strategies to improve classroom and school-wide relationships.

Effective during-incident strategies to promote student self-regulation.

Post-incident strategies that encourage reflection, reason, and repair.

Program Details

For Educators and administrators looking to enhance their behavioral management frameworks.

Intention: To protect student dignity while practicing evidence-based approaches designed for a long-term goal of self-directed, self-regulated, and responsible student behavior.

Overview: This session explores the neuroscience behind all human behavior and unpacks the essential elements that students need to be their best selves. The academy enhances any existing discipline practice by providing a deeper understanding of proactive, research-based strategies.

Outcome: Participants learn to apply proactive strategies to improve relationships, during-incident strategies to promote self-regulation, and post-incident strategies to encourage reason and repair.



Maintaining the dignity of each student while constantly working toward the long-term goal of self-directed, self-regulated, and responsible behavior."

Questions?

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CharacterPlus

Explore Our Other Programs

Athleadership Academy in Character Education (AACE)

At The Table

Character-Based Discipline

CharacterPlus Way

Character Visions

Character Survey

C2 Audit

Culture Carriers

District or School Consulting

iCharacterPlus

Professional Academy in Character Excellence (PACE)

Schools of Character Academy (SOCA)

Schools of Character (SOC)
Applications Support

CHARACTER GOES THE DISTANCE

INTENTION

To improve overall school culture and climate, as well as increase academic achievement and decrease disciplinary incidents, regardless of a school's geographic, socio-economic, or demographic profile.

OVERVIEW

This successful evidence-based process's power and sustainability rests in its framework, which emphasizes core values and implementation unique to the school community. By using data for ongoing assessment, monitoring, and refinement, a comprehensive and sustainable process is created.

OUTCOME

Schools that complete The CharacterPlus Way process show higher test scores and academic performance while decreasing disciplinary incidents. School culture and climate improves, relationships are strengthened, and belonging takes a front seat. Additionally, many schools are ready to go through the Schools of Character recognition process after implementation.

TO START

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus Kansas City, at drusert@characterplus.org to learn more.



CharacterPlus

— WAY —

WHOLE-SCHOOL TRANSFORMATION

The Gold Standard for School Culture and Climate

CharacterPlus Way® is an evidence-based process developed by CharacterPlus to transform school climate, increase academic achievement, and reduce behavior referrals. This comprehensive three-year process was the focus of a federally funded study, with successful results published nationally.

The power and sustainability of this process is found in its framework, which emphasizes core values and implementation unique to each individual school community. By using data for ongoing assessment, monitoring, and refinement, a sustainable process is created that works regardless of a school's geographic, socio-economic, or demographic profile.

Program Details

Intention: To improve overall school culture and climate, as well as increase academic achievement and decrease disciplinary incidents.

Overview: This evidence-based process utilizes customized on-site coaching and consultation services to allow schools to address specific issues at a pace that works for their staff and students. It is a compelling process that significantly impacts school culture, resulting in healthier schools where students are engaged in more prosocial behavior.

Outcome: Federal research grants provided data showing that when implemented with fidelity, staff morale and sense of purpose are higher, students score better on state assessment tests, and there is a significant reduction in behavior referrals. Additionally, many schools are prepared to go through the Schools of Character recognition process after implementation.

RESEARCH-BACKED RESULTS

Behavioral Impact: Students demonstrate more prosocial behavior and fewer office referrals occur.

Academic Growth: More students score at proficient or advanced levels on state assessment tests.

Staff Well-being: Higher staff morale and a stronger sense of purpose among educators.

Community Connection: Students feel greater feelings of belonging and are more likely to view the school as a community.

A Data-Driven Approach: Our annual cSurvey provides the quantitative measurements needed to shape and refine the CharacterPlus Way® process for early childhood, elementary, middle, and high school.



Schools that complete The CharacterPlus Way® process show higher test scores and academic performance while decreasing disciplinary incidents. School culture improves, relationships are strengthened, and belonging takes a front seat."

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CharacterPlus

Explore Our Other Programs

Athleadership Academy in Character Education (AACE)

At The Table

Character-Based Discipline

CharacterPlus Way

Character Visions

Character Survey

C2 Audit

Culture Carriers

District or School Consulting

iCharacterPlus

Professional Academy in Character Excellence (PACE)

Schools of Character Academy (SOCA)

Schools of Character (SOC)
Applications Support

CHARACTER GOES THE DISTANCE

INTENTION

To cultivate cooperative, compassionate, honest, and reflective middle school students who take responsibility for their learning, identify their own core values, and are given a variety of opportunities to practice them in their school and community.

OVERVIEW

Character Visions is a character and inter- and intrapersonal skills curriculum that impacts middle school students' sense of autonomy, belonging, and competence. The easy-to-follow lessons, connected to character education best practices, foster collaboration between students, encourage critical thinking about themselves and the world, and help them be active participants in creating a positive classroom and school community.

OUTCOME

Middle school students who are aware of and intentional about building their personal character strengths feel a strong sense of belonging to their classroom and school and have the courage and competence to meet needs in their school and community.

TO START

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus Kansas City, at drusert@characterplus.org to learn more.



Character Visions

HELPING STUDENTS DEVELOP THEIR BEST SELVES

A COMPREHENSIVE
THREE-LEVEL
CURRICULUM

Middle School Character Curriculum

Character Visions is a character and interpersonal and intrapersonal skills curriculum that impacts middle school students' sense of autonomy, belonging, and competence. The easy-to-follow lessons, based on character education best practices, foster collaboration between students, encourage critical thinking about themselves and the world, and help them be active participants in creating a positive classroom and school community. By helping students identify their own core values, the curriculum provides a variety of opportunities to practice them daily in their school and community.

Program Details

Intention: To cultivate cooperative, compassionate, honest, and reflective middle school students who take responsibility for their learning, identify their own core values, and are given a variety of opportunities to practice them in their school and community.

Overview: A character and inter/intrapersonal skills curriculum that focuses on building a student's sense of autonomy, belonging, and competence. Character Visions helps middle schoolers explore the character traits they would like to live by, connections to other students, and how to make a positive impact in their community.

Outcome: Middle school students who are aware of and intentional about building their personal character strengths feel a strong sense of belonging to their classroom and school. They develop the courage and competence to meet needs in their school and community.

Character Visions is structured across three distinct levels to support student growth throughout their middle school years

Character Visions helps middle schoolers explore:

PERSONAL IDENTITY

The character traits they would like to live by.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

What is happening in their community and how to make a positive impact.

STRONGER CONNECTIONS

Building meaningful connections to their school and other students.

Questions?

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus
Kansas City at drusert@characterplus.org.



REGISTER

CharacterPlus

Explore Our Other Programs

Athleadership Academy in Character Education (AACE)

At The Table

Character-Based Discipline

CharacterPlus Way

Character Visions

Character Survey

C2 Audit

Culture Carriers

District or School Consulting

iCharacterPlus

Professional Academy in Character Excellence (PACE)

Schools of Character Academy (SOCA)

Schools of Character (SOC)
Applications Support

CHARACTER GOES THE DISTANCE

INTENTION

To help administrators in their quest to better understand where excellence can be attained in their school or district, CharacterPlus offers our Culture and Climate Survey platform.

OVERVIEW

Character Survey questions are age/participant appropriate and thoughtfully brief. Participation rates are high on our mobile-friendly platform, and all responses are collected anonymously. The CharacterPlus results report allows a school team to easily see staff and parents/guardians data.

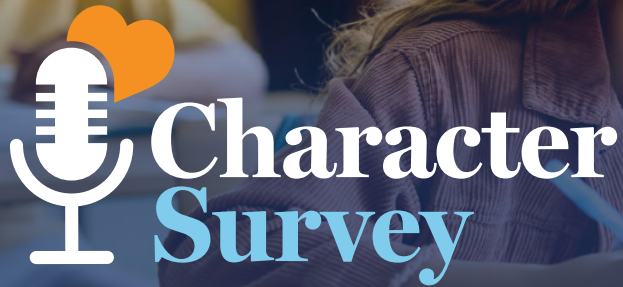
OUTCOME

The Character Survey questions will give you insight into the following climate and culture categories in your school:

Feelings of Belonging | Sense of School as Community | Sense of Autonomy | Sense of Competence | Sense of School Safety | Parents' Involvement at Home | Parents' Involvement at School | Student Engagement

TO START

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus Kansas City, at drusert@characterplus.org to learn more.



MEASURING CLIMATE AND CULTURE

Character Insights for Growth

Over the last three decades of positively impacting school culture and climate, CharacterPlus has become an evidence-based leader in assessing the critical factors that lead to great schools. The Character Survey platform offers administrators a clear, objective way to measure the "heart" of their school. By collecting anonymous feedback, this tool moves your team from guessing what staff, parents and guardians need to knowing exactly where to focus your resources for the greatest impact.

The CharacterPlus results report allows your school team to easily see gaps in perceptions between stakeholder groups surveyed to include staff, and parents/guardians.

Program Details

Intention: To provide administrators with a robust culture and climate platform that identifies exactly where excellence can be attained.

Overview: This mobile-friendly, anonymous survey captures high participation rates from staff, and families through brief, information-appropriate questions.

Outcome: Teams gain immediate, actionable data across key categories including belonging, safety, autonomy, and community engagement to drive school improvement.

CHARACTER SURVEY CATEGORIES

The survey provides data-driven insights into these key areas of the school experience:

Feelings of Belonging

Sense of school as community, autonomy, competence, and school safety

Parents involvement at home and school

MSIP6 Aligned



Ensuring school voices are heard and respected.



Providing school culture and climate data and reports periodically to all stakeholders.



Addressing positive classroom learning environments.

Tier 1: Character Survey & Results – Full setup, mobile access, and a Key Indicators Report with data processing protocols.

Tier 2: Character Survey, Results & Support – Everything in Tier 1, plus two hours of expert Zoom coaching for data interpretation and strategic planning.

Questions?

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus Kansas City at drusert@characterplus.org.



CharacterPlus

Explore Our Other Programs

Athleadership Academy in Character Education (AACE)

At The Table

Character-Based Discipline

CharacterPlus Way

Character Visions

Character Survey

C2 Audit

Culture Carriers

District or School Counseling

iCharacterPlus

Professional Academy in Character Excellence (PACE)

Schools of Character Academy (SOCA)

Schools of Character (SOC)
Applications Support

CHARACTER GOES THE DISTANCE

INTENTION

We are often asked by schools how they know if they are ready to apply for Schools of Character recognition. We created a tool called the c2Audit, which is based on our years of experience helping schools transform their culture and climate.

OVERVIEW

A consultant from our programming team will spend approximately three hours at your school during a typical day. They will tour the building and meet with the administration and/or the culture and climate team to learn about the level of character education implementation in the school.

OUTCOME

This process will create a list of implementation possibilities aligned with the requirements of the School of Character framework, as well as a recommendation regarding the school's timing for applying to Schools of Character.

TO START

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus Kansas City, at drusert@characterplus.org to learn more.



C2 Audit

SCHOOL CLIMATES & CULTURES OF EXCELLENCE

Assessing Your Path to Recognition

We are often asked by schools if they have a general assessment of how aligned their practices are with the *11 Principles of Character Education*, or if there are key components missing before they apply for Schools of Character recognition. We created a tool called the C2 Audit, which is based on our years of experience helping schools transform their culture and climate. This process helps school teams understand where excellence can be attained and provides the professional dialogue needed to guide future goals.

Curriculum & Core Topics

Intention: To provide an expert opinion for your building by assessing how aligned current practices are with the *11 Principles*. It aims to help administrators understand where excellence can be attained and determine if a school is ready to apply for Schools of Character recognition.

Overview: A consultant from our programming team will spend approximately 2–3 hours at your school during a typical school day. They will tour the building and meet with the administration and/or the culture and climate team to learn about the depth of character education implementation in the school.

Outcome: This process creates a list of implementation possibilities aligned with the requirements of the School of Character framework. Participants receive specific recommendations regarding the school's next steps for implementation and, if applicable, the ideal timing for submitting an application for Schools of Character recognition.

KEY FOCUS AREAS OF THE AUDIT:

Belonging & Community:

Assessing how connected and valued students and staff feel within the building.

Autonomy & Trust:

Evaluating opportunities for student voice and the level of trust within the leadership structure.

Competence & Challenge:

Ensuring students are challenged and staff feel empowered in their roles.



This was one of the best assessments we have ever done, and it has provoked great conversations about what we can continue to improve upon! It's definitely impacting and guiding our goals for the future, too.

Dr. Lorinda Krey,
Principal

Questions?

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus
Kansas City at drusert@characterplus.org.



CharacterPlus

Explore Our Other Programs

Athleadership Academy in Character Education (AACE)

At The Table

Character-Based Discipline

CharacterPlus Way

Character Visions

Character Survey

C2 Audit

Culture Carriers

District or School Counseling

iCharacterPlus

Professional Academy in Character Excellence (PACE)

Schools of Character Academy (SOCA)

Schools of Character (SOC)
Applications Support

CHARACTER GOES THE DISTANCE

INTENTION

Ensure your school thrives with every interaction by building positive character and inter- and intrapersonal skills with your educators beyond the classroom. Create stronger bonds and a sense of belonging for all support staff in your school by giving them the tools to strengthen relationships on buses, in the lunchroom, and throughout the building.

OVERVIEW

For hundreds of children in your school district, their bus driver, custodial staff, lunchroom team, before-school care, nurse, para-professionals, and administrative assistants are the first educators they interact with as they begin their school day. As a result, your school's character initiative is put in motion long before students enter the classroom.

OUTCOME

Outcomes include an increased sense of belonging and safety in every school setting for students, an in-depth understanding of why each staff member matters in this effort, and positive relationships being forged even in the micro-moment interactions found between students and members of your support staff.

TO START

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus Kansas City, at drusert@characterplus.org to learn more.



EDUCATORS BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Every Interaction Matters

For hundreds of children in your school district, their bus driver, custodial staff, lunchroom team, before-school care, nurse, para-professionals, and administrative assistants are the first educators they interact with as they begin their school day. As a result, your school's character initiative is put in motion long before students enter the classroom.

Program Details:

Intention: To ensure your school thrives with every interaction by building positive character and inter- and intrapersonal skills with your educators beyond the classroom.

Overview: Create stronger bonds and a sense of belonging for all support staff in your school by giving them the tools to strengthen relationships on buses, in the lunchroom, and throughout the building.

Outcomes: Outcomes include an increased sense of belonging and safety in every school setting for students, an in-depth understanding of why each staff member matters in this effort, and positive relationships being forged even in the micro-moment interactions found between students and members of your support staff.

CULTURE CARRIERS WILL HELP YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY BY:

CREATING Stronger bonds for support staff

GIVING Support staff tools to strength relationships throughout the building

INCREASING Student safety in every school setting

EMPOWERING Role models for the students

Ensure your school thrives with every interaction by building positive character and inter- and intrapersonal skills with your educators beyond the classroom.

Questions?

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus
Kansas City at drusert@characterplus.org.



CharacterPlus

Explore Our Other Programs

Athleadership Academy in Character Education (AACE)

At The Table

Character-Based Discipline

CharacterPlus Way

Character Visions

Character Survey

C2 Audit

Culture Carriers

District or School Consulting

iCharacterPlus

Professional Academy in Character Excellence (PACE)

Schools of Character Academy (SOCA)

Schools of Character (SOC)
Applications Support

CHARACTER GOES THE DISTANCE

INTENTION

CharacterPlus provides partners with access to thought leaders in Character Education and School Climate. CharacterPlus consulting makes it possible for partner districts to experience a variety of professional development expertise at the school or district level.

OVERVIEW

Each partner district has access to consulting hours as part of CharacterPlus partnership. Needs are determined by the district or school.

OUTCOME

High-quality professional development makes character education and school climate initiatives possible. Whether foundational character education concepts or innovations in the field, these one-day workshops are designed for districts with information and tools that can be used to deepen practice.

TO START

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus Kansas City, at drusert@characterplus.org to learn more.



District Training

WORKSHOP SERIES

ONLINE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Your Access to Regional Expertise

The CharacterPlus District Training Series ensures that partners have access to the region's foremost thought leaders in Character Education and School Climate. CharacterPlus partner districts understand that regular professional development is necessary to generate new ideas, build educator confidence, and create a robust network of support. This ongoing regional commitment to training improves the school experience for teachers, students, and families alike.

High-quality professional development makes character education and school climate initiatives possible.

Program Details

Intention: To ensure that partners have consistent access to thought leaders and specialized variety in professional development offerings.

Overview: Each partner district has access to four training sessions per year as part of their CharacterPlus partnership. Topics are strategically chosen by the District Leaders' Council to meet the collective and current needs of our regional educators.

Outcome: These one-day workshops equip districts with practical information and tools designed to deepen character education practice immediately. Whether focusing on foundational concepts or the latest innovations in the field, these sessions make it possible to share learning experiences and perspectives across diverse districts.

A PARTNERSHIP ADVANTAGE



Collaborative Learning



Expert Guidance



Aligned Growth

Questions?

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus
Kansas City at drusert@characterplus.org.



REGISTER

CharacterPlus

Explore Our Other Programs

Athleadership Academy in Character Education (AACE)

At The Table

Character-Based Discipline

CharacterPlus Way

Character Visions

Character Survey

C2 Audit

Culture Carriers

District or School Counseling

iCharacterPlus

Professional Academy in Character Excellence (PACE)

Schools of Character Academy (SOCA)

Schools of Character (SOC)
Applications Support

CHARACTER GOES THE DISTANCE

INTENTION

Every educator deserves access to high-quality character education professional development. CharacterPlus partners have access to a wide variety of free online programming. iCharacterPlus provides the opportunity for educators to grow in their knowledge of why character education is important, as well as the best practices to put in place.

OVERVIEW

Content is focused on relevant topics around student well-being, inter/intrapersonal skill-building, and character development. Every educator in your district can now achieve Foundational Certification in Character Education, learn how to conduct Class Meetings, or develop a deeper understanding of the ABCs. iCharacterPlus modules are self-paced and can be utilized individually, with a PLC/grade-level/content team, or for a faculty meeting.

OUTCOME

Our goal is resolute: helping students and staff in our partner districts build the character they need to flourish. Access to this kind of professional development paves the way for classrooms and schools of character to be built.

TO START

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus Kansas City, at drusert@characterplus.org to learn more.



ONLINE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Your Hub For Character Excellence

Every educator deserves access to high-quality character education professional development. As a CharacterPlus partner school district, your staff has free, unlimited access to all programming on our iCharacterPlus online platform. This unique character education resource provides the opportunity for educators to grow in their knowledge of why character education is important and learn the best practices to put in place—anytime, anywhere.

iCharacterPlus modules are self-paced and can be utilized individually, with a PLC/grade-level/content team, or for a faculty meeting.

Program Details

Intention: To ensure every educator has access to high-quality character education professional development through a wide variety of online programming.

Overview: Hosted on our Teach:able platform, these self-paced training modules focus on character development and student well-being. Every educator in your district can achieve Foundational Certification, learn to conduct Class Meetings, or develop a deeper understanding of the ABCs.

Outcome: This kind of direct access paves the way for classrooms and schools of character to be built district-wide. While the platform is digital, we remain committed to human interaction, and some modules include built-in opportunities for feedback from CharacterPlus staff.

ONLINE RESOURCES INCLUDE

- Foundational Certification in Character Education
- The Community-Building Series
- Intrinsic Motivation Resources
- The Multicultural Classroom
- The Encouragement Series
- Schools of Character
- Class Meetings

Questions?

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus Kansas City at drusert@characterplus.org.



CharacterPlus

Explore Our Other Programs

Athleadership Academy in Character
Education (AACE)

At The Table

Character-Based Discipline

CharacterPlus Way

Character Visions

Character Survey

C2 Audit

Culture Carriers

District or School Counseling

iCharacterPlus

**Professional Academy in Character
Excellence (PACE)**

Schools of Character Academy (SOCA)

Schools of Character (SOC)
Applications Support

CHARACTER GOES THE DISTANCE

INTENTION

To support leaders and employees in developing essential character-based competencies that drive individual growth and organizational success. Grounded in the belief that how people are developed shapes workplace culture, PACE empowers participants to intentionally cultivate environments where accountability, empathy, resilience, and integrity thrive.

OVERVIEW

Participants will engage in a series of interactive learning experiences designed to strengthen character in the workplace. Through reflection, collaboration, and practical application, participants will explore key focus areas including accountability in daily work, voice and autonomy, valuing expertise, resilience in the face of adversity, and ethical decision-making. Learning is immediately connected to real-world workplace contexts to enhance culture and performance.

OUTCOME

Participants will build the capacity to lead and contribute with character, applying practical strategies that strengthen relationships, improve performance, and foster positive workplace culture. They will be prepared to integrate character-based practices into their daily work, supporting retention, collaboration, and the development of high-performing, values-driven organizations.

TO START

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus Kansas City, at drusert@characterplus.org to learn more.



PACE

PROFESSIONAL
ACADEMY IN
CHARACTER
EXCELLENCE

IDEAL FOR

Positive Character, Positive Returns

The Professional Academy in Character Excellence (PACE) is a unique initiative that draws on educational best practices to build essential character skills in the workplace. Grounded in the belief that who we hire and how we develop them determines organizational success, PACE equips leaders with the human-centered competencies today's workplaces urgently need.

Curriculum & Core Topics

Intention: To build essential character skills, such as resilience, empathy, accountability, and integrity, that strengthen workplace culture and employee effectiveness.

Overview: Developed by CharacterPlus, PACE is a multi-session professional learning experience that equips employees and leaders with practical tools to improve relationships, decision-making, and performance.

Outcome: Participants develop stronger interpersonal and leadership skills, leading to improved collaboration, reduced conflict, and increased employee retention.

HR PROFESSIONALS responsible for employee development, retention, and organizational health

ORGANIZATIONS experiencing challenges with accountability, communication, or workplace conflict

COMPANIES navigating remote or hybrid environments and needing stronger connection and trust

TEAMS aiming to improve performance by strengthening character-based skills like resilience, empathy, and integrity

Questions?

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus
Kansas City at drusert@characterplus.org.



REGISTER

CharacterPlus

Explore Our Other Programs

Athleadership Academy in Character Education (AACE)

At The Table

Character-Based Discipline

CharacterPlus Way

Character Visions

Character Survey

C2 Audit

Culture Carriers

District or School Counseling

iCharacterPlus

Professional Academy in Character Excellence (PACE)

Schools of Character Academy (SOCA)

Schools of Character (SOC)
Applications Support

CHARACTER GOES THE DISTANCE

INTENTION

To support educators and school leaders in creating and sustaining high-quality, positive character initiatives that become your school's core operating system. SOCA empowers participants to intentionally align their practices, policies, and culture with evidence-based character frameworks to ensure all students and stakeholders thrive.

OVERVIEW

Participants will engage in guided learning experiences focused on the Schools of Character framework and application process. Through reflection, collaboration, and strategic planning, participants will examine their current practices, gather and align evidence, and strengthen implementation across key domains of character. The academy provides practical tools, feedback, and support to help schools build a cohesive and sustainable culture of character.

OUTCOME

Participants will develop the capacity to effectively implement and articulate a comprehensive character initiative within their school community. They will leave with a clear plan, aligned evidence, and the confidence to apply for Schools of Character recognition, while fostering a culture that positively impacts students, staff, and the broader community.

TO START

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus Kansas City, at drusert@characterplus.org to learn more.



SOCA

SCHOOLS OF CHARACTER ACADEMY

Schools of Character Academy (SOCA) By Character**Plus**

The Schools of Character Academy (SOCA) is an intensive, in-person leadership experience designed to ignite a movement of character-rich schools worldwide. Grounded in the *11 Principles of Character Education Framework*, SOCA equips leadership teams to grow in purpose and integrity while shaping school cultures defined by trust, clarity, and belonging.

Our Core Commitments to Your Journey:

Clarify Identity and Purpose

Every journey starts by understanding who you are and where you aspire to go. We help leaders assess current realities to design a future grounded in human flourishing.

Cultivate Shared Values

Core values must be clearly defined and lived consistently. We help embed these values into rituals, instructional practices, and daily decision-making.

Prioritize Intentional Relationships

Character grows in community. We strengthen emotional intelligence and trust to empower leaders to model character in action.

Align Systems with Beliefs

To sustain growth, schools must design structures—from curriculum to discipline—that reinforce their espoused values. We help you audit and redesign systems so character is embedded, not episodic.

Measure, Reflect, and Renew

Character development is a continuous cycle. We provide the tools for quantitative assessment and qualitative storytelling to ensure growth is visible and sustained.

More details to come in Fall 2026

Questions?

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus
Kansas City at drusert@characterplus.org.



CharacterPlus****

Explore Our Other Programs

Athleadership Academy in Character Education (AACE)

At The Table

Character-Based Discipline

CharacterPlus Way

Character Visions

Character Survey

C2 Audit

Culture Carriers

iCharacterPlus

Professional Academy in Character Excellence (PACE)

Schools of Character Academy (SOCA)

CHARACTER GOES THE DISTANCE

INTENTION

The Schools of Character application process begins with a rigorous self-evaluation and the creation of a portfolio demonstrating a school's character education implementation. This process can at first seem daunting; however, we believe it has the potential to be the most valuable professional development your school has ever done.

OVERVIEW

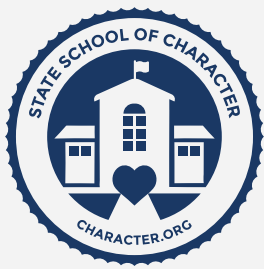
Workshops are offered in the summer and fall to equip schools with the knowledge to confidently apply for Schools of Character. The workshop is an overview of the application process, including best practices in creating a strong portfolio. There are also opportunities for schools who have been through the process to mentor applicants.

OUTCOME

School teams feel empowered to confidently lead their school through the Schools of Character process.

TO START

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus Kansas City, at drusert@characterplus.org to learn more.



Schools of Character

THE PATH TO STATE CERTIFICATION

Your Partner in Achieving Character Excellence

The Schools of Character application process begins with a rigorous self-evaluation and the creation of a portfolio demonstrating a school's character education implementation. This process can at first seem daunting; however, we believe it has the potential to be the most valuable professional development your school has ever done.

As the Missouri affiliate for the Character.org Schools of Character certification, CharacterPlus guides school leaders through the application and manages the evaluation process.

Details

Intention: To help leaders understand that the application process is a transformative journey of self-reflection. It leads schools through a rigorous self-evaluation to demonstrate high-level character education implementation.

Overview: Workshops are offered in the summer and fall to equip schools with the knowledge to confidently apply for Schools of Character. The training provides an overview of the application process, including best practices in creating a strong portfolio. These sessions are also available online at iCharacterPlus, and schools that have been through the process are often available to mentor new applicants.

Outcome: The certification evaluates the quality and consistency of implementation regarding The 11 Principles of Character Education. Successful schools demonstrate competence in embedding proactive strategies that promote core ethical values, fostering self-motivation, and offering a challenging academic curriculum for all learners.

CHARACTERPLUS PARTNERS INCLUDE

69

State Certified
Schools of Character

81

Nationally Certified
Schools of Character

How We Support Your Journey:

State Schools of Character

Process Overview: We provide a clear, step-by-step roadmap to navigate the certification journey with total confidence.

Application Writing Mentors: We connect you with experienced leaders who help you articulate your school's unique impact and tell your story effectively.

Promising Practices Information:

We offer expert guidance on how to highlight the specific strategies in your building that have shown measurable results.

Questions?

Contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus
Kansas City at drusert@characterplus.org.



CharacterPlus

Program Dates & Prices

KC SELf Semester One Fall

\$800

September 30, 2026 8:30-3:30 lunch provided
October 22, 2026
November 10, 2026
December 15, 2026

KC SELf Semester Two Spring

\$800

January 14, 2027 8:30-3:30 lunch provided
February 18, 2027
March 11, 2027
April 15, 2027

KC TACE

\$1,100

September 29, 2026 8:30-3:30 lunch provided
November 17, 2026
January 12, 2027
February 23, 2027
April 6, 2027

KC CACE SEMESTER 1

\$600

September 10, 2026 8:30-3:30 lunch provided
October 7, 2026
November 11, 2026

KC CACE SEMESTER 2

\$600

January 15, 2027 8:30-3:30 lunch provided
February 11, 2027
April 8, 2027

Unless otherwise noted, all Kansas City Region workshops and academies are held at

Frontier Schools Central Office

6800 Corporate Drive, Kansas City, MO 64120

We would like to thank Frontier Schools for providing training space for the region.

For all Greater Kansas City Region programming-related questions please contact Debbie Rusert, Director of CharacterPlus | Kansas City, drusert@characterplus.org District Partnership Pricing (please contact drusert@characterplus.org for non-partnership pricing)





Character**Plus**[®]

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