



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

**Virtues and Character Recognition Award:  
Recognizing Elementary Schools in 2012**

**APPLICATION**

Name of School: _____	
School District: _____	
Address: _____ _____	
Telephone: _____	
Principal: _____	
Contact Person: _____	
E-mail: _____	
School Enrollment: _____	Grade levels: _____

**Instructions:** *Complete the Verification of School Faculty Meeting Form on page 3 and respond to each of the criteria on page 4. Your responses should provide reviewers with a clear understanding of what character development and education mean in the context of your school and the means by which your school addresses these areas. You should address each question, be as specific as possible, and cite examples whenever appropriate. In addition to the Verification of School Faculty Meeting Form, there is a limit of 5 pages for schools submitting an application for the first time, and a limit of 6 pages for schools having previously submitted an application in 2008 or 2010. SUBMIT 5 COPIES OF THE APPLICATION. Only one copy of supplementary materials needs to be submitted.*

**Mail completed applications to be received on or before January 27, 2012 to:**

Dr. Jacques Benninga  
c/o Virtues and Character Recognition Program  
Kremen School of Education and Human Development  
California State University, Fresno  
Fresno, CA 93740-0202  
Telephone: (559) 278-0253 E-mail: [jackb@csufresno.edu](mailto:jackb@csufresno.edu)



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

## **Virtues and Character Recognition Award: 2012** **Elementary Schools**

The word *character* is derived from the Greek “to mark” or “to engrave”. People with good character display good behavior and such habits are embedded, or marked, on a person.

The U.S. Department of Education notes the following about character education:

Character education is an inclusive term embracing all aspects of how schools, related social institutions and parents can support the positive character development of children and adults.... Relevant virtues include honesty, justice and fairness, trustworthiness, responsibility, respect, altruism, patience, perseverance, appreciation of diversity, and courage.... For a school to foster character development, it must provide a positive social environment, characterized by leadership; collegiality; a learning orientation among faculty; and ties among school, home and community. Finally, practicing the virtues of civic engagement, civility, and citizenship and embracing the values of democracy are necessary for developing character in both the child and the community. (*Mobilizing for Evidence-Based Character Education*, USDE, 2007).

The curriculum of California’s schools is focused on character education. A strand of the *History-Social Science Framework* is Ethical Literacy and includes recognition of the sanctity of life, the dignity of each individual, a multicultural understanding of values and standards of behavior and respect for universal human rights. The *English-Language Arts Framework* speaks to a “clearly communicated sense of common values” and the reading of literature that speaks “to important questions and values all of us in a community must address”.

With this background, CSU Fresno’s *Bonner Center for Character Education and Citizenship*, in conjunction with County Offices of Education throughout the Central Valley, encourage your school’s involvement in activities to develop wholesome virtues in our youth.

Highlights of previous award winning school applications can be found at:  
[http://education.csufresno.edu/bonnercenter/promissing\\_practice/promissing\\_practice.html](http://education.csufresno.edu/bonnercenter/promissing_practice/promissing_practice.html)

This application is an attempt to have schools describe their efforts. Our award process is an effort to publicly recognize schools, their faculties and staffs and student bodies that demonstrate outstanding efforts on behalf of students.

**WE ENCOURAGE YOUR PARTICIPATION!**

## Verification of School Faculty Meeting to Discuss Character Education (to be included with award application)

School Name \_\_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_\_  
 Faculty Meeting Date \_\_\_\_\_ Verified by: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** The three criteria below and their quality indicators define the elements that should be present in an exemplary character education school. They are the criteria your school will address in its narrative application. **Please discuss each of these questions with your faculty prior to writing and submitting your application for the Virtues and Character Recognition Award and submit this completed page as part of your application.** Check the items under each criterion that were discussed with your faculty, note the highlights of any pertinent discussion (see #4, Summary Statement, under the Application Criteria), and submit this page as part of your application after the cover page.

	Check each item discussed ✓
<b>CRITERION 1:</b> This school promotes core ethical values as the basis of good behavior.	
• Can you describe why Character Education is important for American schools?	
• Can you describe what the CE goals are for your school?	
• Has your school made progress in achieving its intended goals?	
<b>CRITERION 2:</b> This school fosters an intentional, proactive and comprehensive approach to its core values in all phases of school life.	
• Can you describe how CE is infused throughout your school's curriculum?	
• Does your school ensure a clean, secure and healthy environment?	
• Do adults at your school promote and model fairness, equity, caring and respect?	
<b>CRITERION 3:</b> This school provides students with opportunities for moral action.	
• Do students at your school contribute in meaningful ways to the school, to others and to the community?	
• Does your school promote social competencies and behaviors by students?	
• If your school has previously won the Bonner Center's award, can you describe changes/updates in its CE program since receiving the award previously?	

# Virtues and Character Recognition Award: 2012

## Application Criteria for Elementary Schools

**NOTE:** The criteria below and their quality indicators define the elements that should be present in a school with an exemplary character education program. Scoring will be based on how well the school addresses each area. Evaluators will read the application holistically but the application should address each question in order. In addition to the cover sheet, there is a *five-page narrative limit* for first-time applicants (not including page 3). The cover sheet must be completed and attached as the top sheet of the application. Page 3, Verification of School Faculty Meeting, should be next. Supplementary information may accompany the narrative. Those materials will not be returned.

Elementary schools having applied for the Bonner Center's **Virtues and Character Recognition Award** in either 2008 or 2010 must submit a separate section (about 1 page) describing program changes/updates since the previous award application was submitted. See #5 below.

**SUBMIT FIVE (5) COPIES OF THE COMPLETED APPLICATION** (and one set of any supplementary materials) to be **received** by January 27, 2012 to the address on the cover sheet.

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**1. CRITERION: This school promotes core ethical values as the basis of good character.**

- a. Describe why character education is an important area for public schools in America. That is, why should American public schools involve themselves with developing the character of their students?
- b. Describe the character education goals for your school? How (or why) were those goals determined?
- c. Describe your school's progress in working towards your goals— have you made progress? By what process do you measure (or monitor) progress towards achieving your character education goals?

**2. CRITERION: This school fosters an intentional and comprehensive approach to its core values in all phases of school life.**

- a. Describe how character education is addressed at your school throughout the curriculum and at all grade levels. Specifically, are character education topics addressed as separate units of study in the core content; are they infused throughout the curriculum? How are they addressed in other content areas? Provide examples.
- b. Describe how you ensure a clean and secure learning environment as well as a psychologically safe and caring school environment for students at your school.
- c. Describe how the adults at your school (teachers and classified staff) promote and model fairness equity, caring and respect for others.

**3. CRITERION: This school provides students opportunities for moral action.**

- a. Describe how your school makes it a priority for students to contribute in meaningful ways to the school, to others and to the community. Do your students volunteer, do they engage in service learning at their school? In their community? Please give a rationale for such student involvement and examples of how this aspect is implemented.

**4. SUMMARY STATEMENT**

Include in your Summary Statement (a) highlights of your school's discussion about its program based on the Verification of School Faculty Meeting form and (b) describe at least one signature program at your school (i.e., a program your school should be known for).

**5. \* Additional section for schools that previously applied for the award (about one page).**