



Bonner Center for Character Education
and Citizenship

Virtues and Character Recognition Award:
Recognizing Elementary Schools in 2014

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 2009 or 2011. SUBMIT 5 COPIES OF THE APPLICATION. Only one copy of supplementary materials needs to be submitted. Applications MUST have a one-inch margin and be written in clear 12-point font.*

Mail completed applications to be received on or before January 17, 2014 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

Virtues and Character Recognition Award: 2014

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 *California Standards for the Teaching Profession* recognize that “teachers in California have a professional responsibility to provide students with safe and caring learning environments, where students’ differences are celebrated and supported, and [where] they acquire the knowledge, skills, strategies, and concepts they will need for successful participation in an increasingly technological and global society” (p.4). In particular, Standard 2—*Creating and Maintaining Effective Environments for Student Learning*—emphasizes the instructional process as one where teachers promote “social development and responsibility within a caring community where each student is treated fairly and respectfully”; where educators establish and maintain “learning environments that are physically, intellectually, and emotionally safe”; and, where teachers promote “positive behavior to ensure a climate in which all students can learn.” (*California Standards for the Teaching Profession* (2009).

As well, the portrait of students meeting its criteria for “the literate individual” painted by the *Common Core State Standards* includes three capacities that are especially pertinent for character development. Students meeting that goal:

- 1. ...comprehend as well as critique:** Students are engaged and open-minded—but discerning—readers and listeners. They work diligently to understand precisely what an author or speaker is saying, but they also question an author’s or speaker’s assumptions and premises and assess the veracity of claims and the soundness of reasoning.
- 2. ... value evidence:** Students cite specific evidence when offering an oral or written interpretation of a text. They use relevant evidence when ...making their reasoning clear to the reader or listener, and they constructively evaluate others’ use of evidence.
- 3. ... come to understand other perspectives and cultures:** Students actively seek to understand other perspectives and cultures through reading and listening.... They evaluate other points of view critically and constructively....
(*English Language Arts Standards: Introduction, CCSS Initiative*)

Our award process is an effort to publicly recognize Central Valley schools, their faculties and staffs and student bodies that demonstrate outstanding efforts on behalf of students.

WE ENCOURAGE YOUR PARTICIPATION!

NOTE: Highlights of previous award winning school applications can be found at:
<http://www.fresnostate.edu/kremen/bonnercenter/practices/>

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 entire 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 after the cover page as part of your application.

	Check each item discussed ✓
CRITERION 1: 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?	
CRITERION 2: 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?	
CRITERION 3: 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: 2014

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 received the Bonner Center's **Virtues and Character Recognition Award** in either 2010 or 2012 must submit a separate section (about 1 page) describing program changes/updates since the previous award application was awarded. See #5 below.

SUBMIT FIVE (5) COPIES OF THE COMPLETED APPLICATION (and one set of any supplementary materials) to be **received** by January 17, 2014 to the address on the cover sheet.

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

- a. Describe why the development of character is an important concern for public schools in America. That is, why should American public schools involve themselves with developing the character of their students? How is character education a responsibility of our schools?
- 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).