



Minnesota Character Council

# CHARACTER Connect

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## Minnesota Character Council

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## A “Don’t Miss” Professional Development Opportunity

Sometimes you run across a workshop or conference that gets you fired up. With inspiring and relevant keynote speakers and breakout sessions, Character.org’s International Forum, Nov. 5–7 in Washington D.C., is shaping up to be one of those “don’t miss” professional development opportunities!

Kicking off the conference with the keynote, “Character – The Science-Backed Solution to Our Mental Health Crisis,” is internationally renowned educational psychologist and award-winning author, Dr. Michele Borba. She will share tools and strategies educators and families can use to equip young people with the resiliency and character strengths that all of us need to navigate life’s storms.

From topics on effective school improvement, data-driven character initiatives and improving staff morale to using service-learning to strengthen youth voice, it will be hard to choose among the many amazing breakout sessions.

Closing out day one, award-winning broadcast journalist, Steve Hartman, will share the keynote, “The Power of Real-Life Stories to Help Students Practice Kindness and Gratitude.” A CBS correspondent since 1998, Hartman is known for creating moving stories about ordinary people doing extraordinary things in his weekly feature “On The Road” and new series, “Kindness 101.” Tens of thousands of teachers have used his videos for lessons on empathy, honesty, fortitude and courage.

Day two begins with Dr. Maurice Elias delivering the keynote “Cracking the Intrinsic Motivation Code: 5 Insights to Help Students Discover Their Moral Compass,” followed by more informative breakout sessions and ending with a celebration of the 2023 National Schools of Character.

Curious to learn more? Visit <https://character.org/forum-2023/>



## Why Support Minnesota's Hope?

Back in April, we shared the statement, "Minnesota's Hope: A vision to build trust and respect" and invited you to sign on as a supporter and share the statement with others in your network. We are happy to report that there are new supporters, but we need to keep the movement growing.

Recently, the Retired Principals of MESPA shared some reasons why they believe the statement should be supported that we hope will resonate with you:

- Many of the students in our schools are in crisis and need hope to recover socially and emotionally to move forward in their lives.
- Conveying hope to students and teachers is inspirational and motivational.
- As school leaders, who are doing the work, we need hope to lift our spirits and of those around us.
- If we are hopeful, an environment of hope surrounds us and promotes a feeling of safety and security throughout the school environment.
- Hope is a cross cultural inspirational concept. Hope is critical as cultural diversity increases in our schools, and among our members.

The Minnesota's Hope statement can be downloaded at <https://www.synergyexchange.org/minnesota-character-council>. Sign on as a supporter at <https://forms.gle/niGKivzknD81VpYR7>.

## Assess Your School Using the 11 Principles Framework

Based on decades of research on effective schools, the 11 Principles serve as guideposts to plan, implement, assess and sustain a comprehensive character development initiative. For more than 25 years, schools have used this framework to transform their schools by creating cultures that support and challenge students and adults to strive for excellence, increasing achievement for all learners, developing prosocial behaviors, and improving job satisfaction and retention among teachers.

Each principle is defined in terms of two to four items that describe what the principle should look like when implemented. Key indicators of exemplary practice follow each of these items. The framework includes a scoring guide to help measure both the current status of implementation and progress over time.

The standards articulated in the *11 Principles Framework for Schools* are also used to evaluate and certify schools and districts as part of Character.org's School of Character program. Synergy & Leadership Exchange is the state sponsor and works in partnership with Character.org to provide the program in Minnesota.



To conduct an 11 Principles self-assessment, download the assessment tool and scoring guide at <https://bit.ly/3sdVdlg>. To learn more about the 11 Principles or Minnesota Schools of Character visit [www.synergyexchange.org/minnesota-schools-of-character](http://www.synergyexchange.org/minnesota-schools-of-character).

When the world says, "give up," hope whispers,  
"try it one more time."  
— Unknown