

Minnesota Promising Practices — View by Principle

The 11 Principles of Effective Character Education (11 Principles) is a research-based framework developed by Character.org as the cornerstone of the Schools of Character program. Schools that implement a unique and successful practice that promotes character development may apply to receive a Minnesota or national Promising Practices award.

A **practice name in red** indicates it has received both state recognition from Synergy & Leadership Exchange and national recognition from Character.org (schools apply separately for state and national recognition).

Character.org updated the 11 Principles framework starting in 2024. Many of changes are minor and the practices listed were based on the 11 Principles prior to this change (year is included in listing). Here are the NEW and former 11 Principles:

NEW 11 Principles framework:

1. A set of core values is selected, defined, embedded, and modeled through the school culture
2. The school develops and implements an intentional, proactive, and comprehensive approach that embeds character into all aspects of school life.
3. Every student understands, cares about, and practices the core values embedded in the school community.
4. The school creates a caring community where everyone feels they belong.
5. The school provides students with opportunities to practice and reflect on the character strengths that are shaping and forming their moral compass.
6. The school offers a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that encourages all students to develop their character strengths.
7. The school fosters character development by encouraging students to “do the right thing” for intrinsic rather than extrinsic reasons.
8. The school embraces shared leadership as a critical path to deepening its character initiative.
9. All staff share the responsibility to implement and reinforce the school’s character initiative.
10. Families and the community are integral partners in the school’s character initiative.
11. The school annually assesses the progress of its comprehensive character initiative and makes changes based on the information collected.

Former 11 Principles (prior to 2024):

1. Core values are defined, implemented and embedded into school culture.
2. Defines "character" comprehensively to include thinking, feeling and doing.
3. Uses a comprehensive, intentional, and proactive approach to character development.
4. Creates a caring community.
5. Provides students with opportunities for moral action.
6. Includes a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character, and helps them to succeed.
7. Strives to foster students' self-motivation.
8. All staff share the responsibility for developing, implementing and modeling ethical character.
9. Fosters shared moral leadership and long-range support for continuous improvement.
10. Engages families and community members as partners in the character initiative.
11. Assesses its implementation of character education, its culture and climate, and the character growth of students on a regular basis.

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PRINCIPLE 1: Core values are defined, implemented and embedded into school culture.

► #BeAFSA

#BeAFSA is a positive behavior campaign that motivates students to Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe and Be Your Best.

Grade Level(s): Mixed

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 3

Topic(s): Behavior Management/Positive Discipline, Bullying/Peer Cruelty Prevention, Mentoring

Year Honored: 2016

Honoree: AFSA District, Vadnais Heights

Main Contact: Liz Burkwald, lburkwald@afsahighschool.com

► Celebrating Diversity: A Minnesota Twins Partnership

Lakes International Language Academy, a K-6 language immersion school, partners with the Minnesota Twins to celebrate diversity, to inspire international-mindedness and build cross-cultural communities.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 4, 10

Topic(s): Social Issues/Diversity/Tolerance

Year Honored: 2012

Honoree: Lakes International Language Academy, Forest Lake

► Character & Leadership Workshop

It is our practice at Orono Schools to offer students the opportunity to continually grow in their personal character development. Thus, during 2009-2010 the 6th grade teachers, in conjunction with high school members of the Character Counts! group, decided to facilitate a full-day Character and Leadership Workshop for all incoming 6th grade students.

Grade Level(s): Middle School

Principle(s) Implemented: 1

Topic(s): Leadership Groups, Mentoring

Year Honored: 2010

Honoree: Orono Middle School, Long Lake

Main Contact: Kim Harder, kharder@orono.k12.mn.us

► Class Theme Video – Make Mistakes

The class focused on how mistakes can lead to better learning. Students assisted in writing, recording and acting in a music video, "Make Mistakes." <http://goo.gl/Q39m4L>

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 7

Topic(s): Academics, Behavior Management/Positive Discipline, Student Autonomy/Empowerment

Year Honored: 2015

Honoree: Bridges Community School, Mankato

Main Contact: Briana Miller, bmille2@isd77.k12.mn.us

► College Shirts & Chants

All scholars and staff receive a new college t-shirt every year with a different color for each grade, a different college name for each classroom, and Cologne Academy's logo on the back. The t-shirts are worn on days of all school assemblies and on interim testing days to "show what you know" and recognize students for both character and academic learning. Every classroom in grades K-4 has a college chant that encourages positive character traits that they stand up and say during the all-school assemblies. The shirts and chants foster a scholarly spirit and are a visual and verbal reminder of being part of a larger community.

Grade Level(s): K-8

Principle(s) Implemented: 1

Year Honored: 2023

Honoree: Cologne Academy

Main Contact: Lynn Peterson, lpeterson@cologneacademy.org

► Core Virtues Program

The school focuses on core virtues to develop students as a whole person, so that they will make a positive contribution to the community. Restorative justice practices are tied in with the virtues as part of discipline procedures.

Grade Level(s): Elementary, Middle School

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 2

Topic(s): Assemblies, Behavior Management/Positive Discipline, Integration into Curriculum

Year Honored: 2015

Honoree: Cologne Academy, Cologne

Main Contact: Jenna McInnis, jmcinnis@cologneacademy.org

► **CR | One Team | KINDNESS Matters**

Through an emphasis on behavioral targets, anti-bullying and acceptance messages, Coon Rapids High School made kindness a focus for the school community. Staff and students organize assemblies, contests, daily and school-wide challenges, spirit weeks and speakers to develop skills in treating others with respect and kindness, persevering in tasks and learning from mistakes.

Grade Level(s): Secondary

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 2

Topic(s): Bullying/Peer Cruelty Prevention, Teaching/Learning of Core Values, Student Autonomy Empowerment

Year Honored: 2018

Honoree: Coon Rapids High School, Coon Rapids

Main Contact: Dr. Annette Ziegler, Annette.Ziegler@AHSchools.us

► **Don't Count Crayons — Value Yourself & Others**

This practice combines homeroom curriculum with a school assembly to promote the "Bluejay Way" expectations of respecting yourself, others, property and learning. Students reflected on a video, drew visuals of what they valued about themselves and created homeroom murals which were included as part of a video presentation at an assembly celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday.

Grade Level(s): Middle School, High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 4

Topic(s): Assemblies, Relationship Building, Teaching/Learning of Core Values

Year Honored: 2013

Honoree: Waseca Junior & Senior High, Waseca

Main Contact: Jeanne Swanson, swaj@waseca.k12.mn.us

► **Ellis Student Groups POWER UP!**

The POWER UP groups meet weekly to discuss struggles, assets and set goals towards making positive choices and persevering through challenges.

Grade Level(s): Middle School

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 7

Topic(s): Academics, Class Meeting/Cooperative Learning, Leadership Groups

Year Honored: 2016

Honoree: Ellis Middle School, Austin

Main Contact: Jennifer Gosha, Jennifer.gosha@austin.k12.mn.us

► **Fair Trade at Loyola Catholic School**

The school educates its students and surrounding community members on the importance of Fair Trade and the social justice issues surrounding it. They make available Fair Trade products and organize events to promote and educate others about Fair Trade.

Grade Level(s): Mixed

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 7

Topic(s): Class Meeting/Cooperative Learning, Social Issues/Diversity/Tolerance, Student Autonomy/Empowerment

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: Loyola Catholic School, Mankato

Main Contact: Samuel Cotton, scotton@loyolacatholicschool.org

► **First Six Weeks**

Traditional Anishinaabe/Ojibwe values are integrated with Responsive Classroom's First Six Weeks of School to create culturally responsive lessons that emphasize character traits and develop social-emotional skills. All teachers are provided lesson plans targeted to their grade level and content area/specialty as an initial guide.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 1

Topic(s): Core Values: Teaching, Learning or Visual Display

Honoree: Red Lake Elementary Complex, Red Lake

Main Contact: Dustin Hinckley, dhinckley@redlake.k12.mn.us

► **Kindness Matters Because I Matter at NRHEG Elementary**

Kindness Matters encompasses year long activities and events for students, staff, and community members, incorporating the four themes of: Kind Words, Kind Actions, Manners Matter, and YOU Matter.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 1

Topic(s): Visual Display of Core Values

Year Honored: 2012

Honoree: NRHEG Elementary, Ellendale

Main Contact: Douglas Anderson, danderson@nrheg.k12.mn.us

► **KoMet PRIDE**

KoMet PRIDE is a positive school-wide behavior program that strives to create a safe, welcoming and respectful school climate where students learn responsible behaviors and develop strong character. It centers around ideas that will help students be successful at school and in life (Practice respect and responsibility; Remain safe; Include others; Display a positive attitude; Engage in learning).

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 4

Topic(s): Behavior Management/Positive Discipline, Bullying/Peer Cruelty Prevention, Relationship Building

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: Kasson-Mantorville Elementary School, Kasson

Main Contact: Karen Besch, k.besch@komets.k12.mn.us

► **Morning Drum Line**

Morning Drum Line offers an empowering way to engage struggling students in a disciplined, confidence-building practice, with the simultaneous benefit of energizing and unifying the greater learning community. Participants make a commitment to arrive early and welcome their peers with a rallying sound that literally drums up excitement and energy for the day ahead. Among participants there has been a reduction in behavioral issues, increased attendance, improved grades and a bolstered sense of self, discipline and spirit.

Grade Level(s): Pre-K–6

Principle(s) Implemented: 1

Topic(s): Behavior Management/Positive Discipline; Core Values: Teaching, Learning or Visual Display

Honoree: Bright Water Montessori School, Minneapolis

Main Contact: Tonicia Abdur Salaam, tonicia@brightwatermontessori.org

► **Pride Day Assembly**

Pride Day monthly assemblies demonstrate how to live the Edina Public Schools' ICCCAR (Integrity, Courage, Commitment, Compassion, Appreciation of Diversity and Responsibility) values.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 3

Topic(s): Assemblies, Teaching/Learning of Core Values

Year Honored: 2010

Honoree: Creek Valley Elementary, Edina

Main Contact: Dr. Kari Dahlquist, kardahlquist@edina.k12.mn.us

► **Promoting Peace Across the Grade Level(s)**

Each student is in a cross grade level peace group that meets on a monthly basis focusing on a specific topic and engaging in activities that promotes peace building and positive relationships.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 4

Topic(s): Bullying/Peer Cruelty Prevention, Relationship Building, Service to Community/Service Learning

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: Cowern Elementary School, North St. Paul

Main Contact: Cindy Piersdorf or Mary Glagavs, cpiersdorf@isd622.org or mglagavs@isd622.org

► **Raleigh's Veterans Day Program**

Raleigh Academy's annual Veterans Day program honors area service members as students learn about respect, responsibility and how the holiday fits with the school's core values. The program includes music, technology projects, and readings by the students.

Grade Level(s): K–8

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 5

Topic(s): Service to Community/Service Learning, Integration into Curriculum, Teaching/Learning of Core Values

Year Honored: 2018

Honoree: Raleigh Academy, Duluth

Main Contact: Danielle Perich, Danielle.perich@duluthedison.com

► **R.O.C.K. Stars – Responsible, Outstanding, Caring, Knowledgeable Students and Staff**

R.O.C.K.S. (Responsible, Outstanding, Caring, Knowledgeable Students and Staff) is the school theme for a whole school approach to character development. The theme is carried out through monthly assemblies, classroom teaching and student reflection time. Students, staff and parents have a common language to use and better understanding about what is good character.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 4

Topic(s): Assemblies, Class Meeting/Cooperative Learning, Teaching/Learning of Core Values

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: Hilltop Primary School, Minnetrista

Main Contact: Nancy Benz, benzn@westonka.k12.mn.us

► **Ride with Pride**

Isanti Intermediate School, School For All Seasons in collaboration with Isanti Primary School and Isanti Middle School created a program designed to improve the quality of the bus riding experience.

Grade Level(s): Mixed

Principle(s) Implemented: 1

Topic(s): Behavior Management/Positive Discipline, Bullying/Peer Cruelty Prevention, Relationship Building

Year Honored: 2012

Honoree: Isanti Intermediate School/School for All Seasons, Isanti

Main Contact: Sara Edwards, sedwards@cambridge.k12.mn.us

► **River Rewards**

We recognize students who display one or all of the following core elements of Respect, Integrity, Value, Excellence, or Responsibility.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 1

Topic(s): Social Recognition/Sportsmanship

Year Honored: 2012

Honoree: Taylors Falls Elementary, Taylors Falls

Main Contact: Joe Thimm, jthimm@chisagolakes.k12.mn.us

► **START (Start to Act Responsibly Today)**

One of the weekly focuses provides additional character development and is called START (Start To Act Responsibly Today). The objective of our START curriculum is to reinforce the core values of respect, responsibility and citizenship. The START curriculum occurs daily the month of September and then once a week for the remainder of the year.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 3

Topic(s): Integration into Curriculum, Teaching/Learning of Core Values

Year Honored: 2010

Honoree: Washington Elementary, Owatonna

Main Contact: Mary Baier, mbaier1@owatonna.k12.mn.us

► **Student Agendas**

Our school provides students with an on TRAC agenda (Think, Record, Act, Check), which is designed to help teach children the organization and communication skills for life including good study and work habits, as well as character development.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 2

Topic(s): Academics

Year Honored: 2010

Honoree: Lakes International Language Academy, Forest Lake

Main Contact: Nancy Hawkinson, nhawkinson@lakesinternational.org

► **Student-Led Orientation and Peer Mentor Program**

Avalon's 10-12th grade students organize a student orientation where they welcome new students to their project-based program and throughout September act as mentors to the new students.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 4

Topic(s): Mentoring, Orientations/Welcoming, Relationship Building

Year Honored: 2016

Honoree: Avalon School, St. Paul

Main Contact: Nora Whalen, nora@avalonschool.org

► **The Dot Dragon**

In art classes, K–5 students read “The Dot” and learned about community. Working in mini-communities of five, students used the school’s core-value attributes to create a colorful, collaborative wall collage of a dragon, the school mascot.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 3

Topic(s): Visual Display of Core Values, Integration into Curriculum, Teaching/Learning of Core Values

Year Honored: 2017

Honoree: Lakes International Language Academy, Forest Lake

Main Contact: Tracy Maurer, tmaurer@mylila.org

PRINCIPLE 2: Defines "character" comprehensively to include thinking, feeling and doing.

► **All School Book Study**

Staff and students participate in a read aloud of the book “Harbor Me” by Jacqueline Woodson one day a week during advisory period. The advisory curriculum team provides summaries and discussion questions to use and aligns elements of the curriculum with particular chapters of the book. The all school book study provides for dialogue and discussion about character journeys, traits and virtues exemplified by the characters and the plot.

Grade Level(s): 6–8

Principle(s) Implemented: 2

Year Honored: 2023

Honoree: Woodbury Middle School

Main Contact: Josh Eidem, jeidem@sowashco.org

► **All-School Morning Meeting**

The first Friday of each month, this K-2 elementary school holds a school-wide morning meeting. The meeting begins with a welcome from each classroom. Second grade students then model the character theme for the month and “Terrific Tiger” awards are presented to students that were nominated for practicing the previous month’s theme. This teacher-led initiative has been successful and parent attendance at the monthly morning meeting continues to increase.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 2

Topic(s): Class Meeting/Cooperative Learning

Year Honored: 2009

Honoree: Chatfield Elementary, Belle Plaine

Main Contact: Lisa Trembl, ltrembl@belleplaine.k12.mn.us

► **Avalon Governance Model**

Students in grades 7-12 learn self-determination, responsibility and respect for others by participating in the Avalon Circle, Congress and Peer Mediation programs outlined in their constitution. This framework helps students acquire positive skills, attitudes and behaviors.

Grade Level(s): Middle School, High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 2

Topic(s): Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation, Student Autonomy Empowerment

Year Honored: 2009

Honoree: Avalon School, St. Paul

Main Contact: Carrie Bakken, carrie@avalonschool.org

► Books for Babies

Ellis Middle School Students collected new books for new babies born in Austin.

Grade Level(s): Middle School

Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 5

Topic(s): Service to Community/Service Learning

Year Honored: 2012

Honoree: Ellis Middle School, Austin

Main Contact: David Brown, david.brown@austin.k12.mn.us

► Caring & Giving: Food Drive

The Caring & Giving Food Drive actively connects children to those in need by working together to earn money; to purchase food; and to shop for items which are then delivered to those in need.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 5

Topic(s): Service to Community/Service Learning

Year Honored: 2012

Honoree: Primrose School of Savage, Savage

Main Contact: Doug Storbeck, dstorbeck@primrosesavage.com

► Choose Kind

The school adopted the saying "Choose Kind" from the book "Wonder" by RJ Palacio in order to value every student and member of the Cedar Ridge Community.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 3

Topic(s): Assemblies, Relationship Building, Social Issues/Diversity/Tolerance

Year Honored: 2015

Honoree: Cedar Ridge Elementary School, Eden Prairie

Main Contact: Ann Swanson or Nancy Benz, ann_swanson@edenpr.org or Nancy_Benz@edenpr.k12.mn.us

► Classroom Agreements

Teacher and students collectively decide on rules and agreements for their classroom at the beginning of the year, those things for which they will hold themselves accountable.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 2

Topic(s): Behavior Management/Positive Discipline

Year Honored: 2011

Honoree: Lakes International Language Academy, Forest Lake

Main Contact: Julie Lundgren, jlundgren@lakesinternational.org

► Core Value Jamboree

The Core Value Jamboree is an intentional opportunity for students to apply understanding of core values, bully prevention, and the school motto of be safe, kind, and responsible to real life situations.

Grade Level(s): Mixed

Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 4

Topic(s): Differentiation/Performance Character, Bullying/Peer Cruelty Prevention, Teaching/Learning of Core Values

Year Honored: 2017

Honoree: North Star Academy, Duluth

Main Contact: Tammy Rackliffe, tammy.rackliffe@duluthedison.com

► Core Virtues Program

The school focuses on core virtues to develop students as a whole person, so that they will make a positive contribution to the community. Restorative justice practices are tied in with the virtues as part of discipline procedures.

Grade Level(s): Elementary, Middle School

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 2

Topic(s): Assemblies, Behavior Management/Positive Discipline, Integration into Curriculum

Year Honored: 2015

Honoree: Cologne Academy, Cologne

Main Contact: Jenna McInnis, jmcinnis@cologneacademy.org

► **CR | One Team | KINDNESS Matters**

Through an emphasis on behavioral targets, anti-bullying and acceptance messages, Coon Rapids High School made kindness a focus for the school community. Staff and students organize assemblies, contests, daily and school-wide challenges, spirit weeks and speakers to develop skills in treating others with respect and kindness, persevering in tasks and learning from mistakes.

Grade Level(s): Secondary

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 2

Topic(s): Bullying/Peer Cruelty Prevention, Teaching/Learning of Core Values, Student Autonomy Empowerment

Year Honored: 2018

Honoree: Coon Rapids High School, Coon Rapids

Main Contact: Dr. Annette Ziegler, Annette.Ziegler@AHSchools.us

► **Growing Together: LILA's Garden for School and Beyond**

LILA's iTerm Gardening class and Garden Club, led by students, grows fresh, organic produce for the cafeteria and local food pantry, and consider students' health and well-being, community needs, and eco-sustainability. "Growing Together" intentionally fosters teamwork within the iTerm classroom and the after-school Garden Club, encouraging students to make decisions as a group and merging formal academic curriculum and extracurricular activities to support character development with a hands-on and holistic approach.

Grade Level(s): 6–12

Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 3

Topic(s): Service to School/School Beautification, Service to Community/Service Learning, Engaging/Interactive Curriculum

Year Honored: 2018

Honoree: Lakes International Language Academy, Forest Lake

Main Contact: Tracy Maurer, tmaurer@mylila.org

► **Henry Sibley Students Against Destructive Decisions (S.A.D.D.)**

S.A.D.D. empowers young people to help each other make healthy life choices. The group investigated and implemented educational, positive and creative ways to bring information to the student body about e-cigarettes, texting and driving, drug usage, energy drinks, and relationship violence.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 5

Topic(s): Assessment & Action, Social Issues/Diversity/Tolerance, Teen Programs/Personal Responsibility

Year Honored: 2015

Honoree: Henry Sibley High School, Mendota Heights

Main Contact: Ann L. Lindberg, ann.lindberg@isd197.org

► **Honesty Play**

Fifth grade students prepare a play on the theme of Honesty (one of the school's ethical principles/core values). They practice the play and present it for the preschool students to help them learn about Honesty. The fifth-graders grow stronger as a class community by working on this meaningful project together, and they also develop a stronger relationship with the preschool students, adding to the sense of community within the building and making the school a more connected place.

Grade Level(s): 5

Principle(s) Implemented: 2

Year Honored: 2023

Honoree: Community of Peace Academy

Main Contact: Sadie Fischer, sadief@cpapk12.org

► **Implementing Social Emotional Learning Curriculum**

Using multiple social emotional learning models, a curriculum was developed and is being implemented during advisory period to enhance students' personal responsibility. Students plan service activities to give back to the community and are working to ensure there is a respectful and welcoming atmosphere for new students.

Grade Level(s): 9–12

Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 4

Topic(s): Teen Programs/Personal Responsibility, Behavior Management/Positive Discipline, Community Members

Year Honored: 2018

Honoree: Northfield Area Learning Center, Northfield

Main Contact: Daryl Kehler, dkeher@northfieldschools.org

► Kids Helping Kids

This project is designed to highlight the importance of giving to and/or serving others. The program goal is to spark a lifelong participation in community service projects. The entire school community makes and donates items to a local children's hospital each year. Students and the community are both greatly impacted.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 4, 10

Topic(s): Service to Community/Service Learning

Year Honored: 2009

Honoree: Schumann Elementary, Orono

Main Contact: Dr. Connie Fladeland, cfladeland@orono.k12.mn.us

► LILA Rocks!: Inclusivity Rock Garden – A Community Project

Each student in grades K–5 painted a stone in a way that represented themselves as a unique and special member of the LILA community, Forest Lake community, the United States, and the world. The rocks were placed in a path leading to the school's entrance as a daily reminder and symbolic display of the school's sense of community and core values in a way that can be easily seen, understood, and discussed by all students, staff, and visitors. Prior to painting the rocks, students learned about community, collaboration, inclusivity, diversity, and what makes each person unique and special.

Grade Level(s): Mixed

Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 4

Topic(s): Core Values: Teaching, Learning or Visual Display, Social Issues/Diversity/Tolerance

Honoree: Lakes International Language Academy — Forest Lake

Main Contact: Tracy Maurer, tmaurer@mylila.org

► Link Crew

Link Crew is a yearlong transition program designed to welcome all sophomores into the school community and ensure students have a positive transition into senior high. Link Crew members develop their leadership and mentoring skills by teaching and modeling leadership concepts and the school core values to the new sophomore students.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 2

Topic(s): Leadership Groups, Mentoring, Orientations/Welcoming

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: Maple Grove Senior High, Maple Grove

Main Contact: Sara Vernig, vernigs@district279.org

► Random Acts

In conjunction with the monthly school theme of "Caring," sixth grade students identify and perform a "Random Act of Kindness" in the community. Afterwards, they reflect and write about the experience and do a presentation.

Grade Level(s): Mixed

Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 4

Topic(s): Engaging/Interactive Curriculum, Relationship Building, Visual Display of Core Values

Year Honored: 2016

Honoree: IJ Holton Intermediate School, Austin

Main Contact: David Brown, david.brown@austin.k12.mn.us

► ReadBrave: A school-wide book club

Avalon high school students teamed with St. Paul Public Libraries and the author A.S. King to read and discuss Everybody Sees the Ants, her young adult novel that deals with issues of bullying and depression. Students recorded public service announcements about bullying and published them on social media sites, created art inspired by the book and participated in writing workshops.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 4

Topic(s): Bullying/Peer Cruelty Prevention, Integration into Curriculum, Social Issues/Diversity/Tolerance

Year Honored: 2013

Honoree: Avalon School, St. Paul

Main Contact: Gretchen Sage-Martinson, gretchen@avalonschool.org

► Student Agendas

Our school provides students with an on TRAC agenda (Think, Record, Act, Check), which is designed to help teach children the organization and communication skills for life including good study and work habits, as well as character development.

Grade Level(s): Elementary
Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 2
Topic(s): Academics
Year Honored: 2010
Honoree: Lakes International Language Academy, Forest Lake
Main Contact: Nancy Hawkinson, nhawkinson@lakesinternational.org

► **Student Leadership and Engagement at Orchard Lake**

Fourth and fifth grade students participate in service to their school through a new model of student leadership that expands the participation level of students involved in leadership service.

Grade Level(s): Elementary
Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 3
Topic(s): Mentoring, Student Autonomy Empowerment
Year Honored: 2016
Honoree: Orchard Lake Elementary School, Lakeville
Main Contact: Marilynn Smith, Marilynn.smith@isd194.org

► **Stuffed Animal Buddy Project**

Eighth-grade students interact with kindergarten students creating a stuffed animal and a story about the animal for their buddy partner resulting in positive relationships between the two age groups. Prior to the interaction, the eighth graders learn about being a positive role model and art skills.

Grade Level(s): K–5
Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 3
Topic(s): Relationship Building, Teaching/Learning of Core Values, Engaging/Interactive Curriculum
Year Honored: 2018
Honoree: North Star Academy, Duluth
Main Contact: Bonnie Jorgenson, Bonnie.Jorgenson@duluthedison.com

► **Unity Week**

Unity Week was inspired by PACER’s idea of coming together as a community against bullying and stand united for kindness, acceptance and inclusion. All students participate in activities and discussions centered around the topic of unity and how, as a school, they can create a welcoming community for all. Students learn about the character traits of kindness, acceptance and inclusion and identify how they will exemplify these traits in their lives. Through this practice, students gain a deeper perspective of how their actions affect others and are an outward display of their character.

Grade Level(s): K–8
Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 4
Topic(s): Bullying/Peer Cruelty Prevention; Social Issues/Diversity/Tolerance
Honoree: Cologne Academy, Cologne
Main Contact: Dr. Lynn Peterson, lpeterson@cologneacademy.org

► **Vision4Life**

Vision4Life is a two-day character seminar and community service experience; young men and women participate separately in hearing speakers, responding in facilitated small group discussion, and providing service in the community.

Grade Level(s): High School
Principle(s) Implemented: 2
Topic(s): Engaging/Interactive Curriculum, Service to Community/Service Learning
Year Honored: 2010
Honoree: Concordia Academy, Roseville
Main Contact: Tim Berner, tim.berner@concordiaacademy.com

PRINCIPLE 3: Uses a comprehensive, intentional, and proactive approach to character development.

► **#BeAFSA**

#BeAFSA is a positive behavior campaign that motivates students to Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe and Be Your Best.

Grade Level(s): Mixed
Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 3

Topic(s): Behavior Management/Positive Discipline, Bullying/Peer Cruelty Prevention, Mentoring

Year Honored: 2016

Honoree: AFSA District, Vadnais Heights

Main Contact: Liz Burkwald, lburkwald@afsahighschool.com

► **Choose Kind**

The school adopted the saying “Choose Kind” from the book “Wonder” by RJ Palacio in order to value every student and member of the Cedar Ridge Community.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 3

Topic(s): Assemblies, Relationship Building, Social Issues/Diversity/Tolerance

Year Honored: 2015

Honoree: Cedar Ridge Elementary School, Eden Prairie

Main Contact: Ann Swanson or Nancy Benz, ann_swanson@edenpr.org or Nancy_Benz@edenpr.k12.mn.us

► **Freedom Week**

Each year students are immersed in learning about the freedoms and rights of Americans. Freedom Week kicks off with an assembly by the local VFW and Legion. Through guest speakers, decorating the entire building and social studies lessons, students are engrossed in the concept that “freedom isn’t free.” Students learn about the sacrifices that have been made in order to have those freedoms and what happens when you lose them.

Grade Level(s): Middle School

Principle(s) Implemented: 3, 10

Topic(s): Core Values: Teaching, Learning or Visual Display; Social Issues/Diversity/Tolerance

Honoree: IJ Holton Intermediate School, Austin

Main Contact: David Brown, David.brown@austin.k12.mn.us

► **Growing Together: LILA’s Garden for School and Beyond**

LILA's iTerm Gardening class and Garden Club, led by students, grows fresh, organic produce for the cafeteria and local food pantry, and consider students' health and well-being, community needs, and eco-sustainability. "Growing Together" intentionally fosters teamwork within the iTerm classroom and the after-school Garden Club, encouraging students to make decisions as a group and merging formal academic curriculum and extracurricular activities to support character development with a hands-on and holistic approach.

Grade Level(s): 6–12

Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 3

Topic(s): Service to School/School Beautification, Service to Community/Service Learning, Engaging/Interactive Curriculum

Year Honored: 2018

Honoree: Lakes International Language Academy, Forest Lake

Main Contact: Tracy Maurer, tmaurer@mylila.org

► **Laker Proud Groups**

Laker Proud Groups provide guidance and support for students and build lasting relationships between students and staff at all grade levels. Multi-age groups of students meet once a month with 1–2 staff members for specific character-building lessons and activities. Groups stay together during their years at elementary school. The practice has shown growth in building friendships, social skills, confidence, a growth mindset, and reducing and standing up against bullying.

Grade Level(s): K–4

Principle(s) Implemented: 3, 4

Topic(s): Mentoring; Relationship Building

Honoree: Winsted and Humphrey Elementary Schools, Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted School District

Main Contact: Laura Heuer, lheuer@hlww.k12.mn.us

► **Letters of Address in the Circles of Influence**

Poems of address are written to the victim, bully and all the members of the circle of influence and then the poems were used in an eighth grade led assembly for students in grades 7-12 on Martin Luther King’s Birthday.

Grade Level(s): Middle School, High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 3, 4, 6

Topic(s): Bullying/Peer Cruelty Prevention, Engaging/Interactive Curriculum, Relationship Building

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: Waseca Junior & Senior High School, Waseca

Main Contact: Jeanette Swanson, Jeanette Swanson: swaj@waseca.k12.mn.us

► **Mind Mapping**

In this practice, students personally associate themselves to character traits and present their ideas and experiences in a spatial manner with color and pictures to build visual connections and insight into their character.

Grade Level(s): Middle School

Principle(s) Implemented: 3

Topic(s): Academics, Integration into Curriculum

Year Honored: 2009

Honoree: Ellis Middle School, Austin

Main Contact: Cathy Cooper, ccooper@austin.k12.mn.us

► **MNOHS Student Recognition Programs**

Many students at all academic levels are recognized for their efforts, attitude and progress. Personalized emails are sent to students and their families. Students complete a survey to reflect on their strengths identified in the recognition and student profiles are highlighted in a weekly newsletter.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 3

Topic(s): Behavior Management/Positive Discipline, Teen Programs/Personal Responsibility

Year Honored: 2016

Honoree: Minnesota Online High School, St. Paul

Main Contact: Kimberly Breeden, k.breeden@mail.mnohs.org

► **Pride Day Assembly**

Pride Day monthly assemblies demonstrate how to live the Edina Public Schools' ICCCAR (Integrity, Courage, Commitment, Compassion, Appreciation of Diversity and Responsibility) values.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 3

Topic(s): Assemblies, Teaching/Learning of Core Values

Year Honored: 2010

Honoree: Creek Valley Elementary, Edina

Main Contact: Dr. Kari Dahlquist, kardahlquist@edina.k12.mn.us

► **START (Start to Act Responsibly Today)**

One of the weekly focuses provides additional character development and is called START (Start To Act Responsibly Today). The objective of our START curriculum is to reinforce the core values of respect, responsibility and citizenship. The START curriculum occurs daily the month of September and then once a week for the remainder of the year.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 3

Topic(s): Integration into Curriculum, Teaching/Learning of Core Values

Year Honored: 2010

Honoree: Washington Elementary, Owatonna

Main Contact: Mary Baier, mbaier1@owatonna.k12.mn.us

► **Stomp Out Bullying At North Junior High**

“Stomp Out Bullying” is a program that empowers students as leaders in their school to build an awareness of bully behavior and how to “stomp it out” by making students and staff aware of what it is and how to deal with bullying. Activities have included a video, announcements, advisory activities, student research and surveys, and an Anti-Bullying Pledge Ribbon in each room.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 3, 5

Topic(s): Bullying/Peer Cruelty Prevention, Staff Development/Student Leadership, Teaching/Learning of Core Values

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: North Junior High School, St. Cloud

Main Contact: Karlyn Doyle, karlyn.doyle@isd742.org

► **Student Leadership and Engagement at Orchard Lake**

Fourth and fifth grade students participate in service to their school through a new model of student leadership that expands the participation level of students involved in leadership service.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 3

Topic(s): Mentoring, Student Autonomy Empowerment

Year Honored: 2016

Honoree: Orchard Lake Elementary School, Lakeville

Main Contact: Marilyn Smith, Marilyn.smith@isd194.org

► **Stuffed Animal Buddy Project**

Eighth-grade students interact with kindergarten students creating a stuffed animal and a story about the animal for their buddy partner resulting in positive relationships between the two age groups. Prior to the interaction, the eighth graders learn about being a positive role model and art skills.

Grade Level(s): K–5

Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 3

Topic(s): Relationship Building, Teaching/Learning of Core Values, Engaging/Interactive Curriculum

Year Honored: 2018

Honoree: North Star Academy, Duluth

Main Contact: Bonnie Jorgenson, Bonnie.Jorgenson@duluthedison.com

► **Systematic Student Management Plan**

This school-wide effort to teach responsible behavior has reduced office referrals by more than 45 percent.

Grade Level(s): Middle School

Principle(s) Implemented: 3

Topic(s): Behavior Management/Positive Discipline

Year Honored: 2011

Honoree: Northfield Middle School, Northfield

Main Contact: Jeff Pesta, jeff.pesta@nfld.k12.mn.us

► **The Dot Dragon**

In art classes, K–5 students read “The Dot” and learned about community. Working in mini-communities of five, students used the school’s core-value attributes to create a colorful, collaborative wall collage of a dragon, the school mascot.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 3

Topic(s): Visual Display of Core Values, Integration into Curriculum, Teaching/Learning of Core Values

Year Honored: 2017

Honoree: Lakes International Language Academy, Forest Lake

Main Contact: Tracy Maurer, tmaurer@mylila.org

► **The Effort Campaign**

The Effort Campaign is a natural extension of ISD 625 School District's Principles of Learning: Organizing for Effort and Self-Management of Learning. The main goal is to increase student effort on all tasks. The objective is to increase student achievement, student self-confidence and self-perseverance for all students at all ability levels.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 3, 7

Topic(s): Teen Programs/Personal Responsibility

Year Honored: 2010

Honoree: Phalen Lake Hmong Studies Magnet School, St. Paul

Main Contact: Catherine Rich, catherine.rich@spps.org

► **Walk the Talk Awards**

The "Walk the Talk of Core Virtues" Awards program at Phalen Lake Hmong Studies Magnet School was created to provide positive recognition to students who perform acts of good virtue at school, involving the school-wide Core Virtues Character Education Program.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 3

Topic(s): Behavior Management/Positive Discipline, Social Recognition/Sportsmanship

Year Honored: 2010

Honoree: Phalen Lake Hmong Studies Magnet School, St. Paul

Main Contact: Catherine Rich, catherine.rich@spps.org

► **Warrior Seminar**

Warrior Seminar is a course to support freshman students in the transition to high school, provide opportunities for career and college exploration, and build social skills. Ideas from the Warrior PRIDE framework (Preparation, Respect, Integrity, Determination, Excellence) are interwoven with lessons and activities from a character development curriculum that helps

students better understand habits that shape their behavior. Teachers, community mentors, guest speakers, and upper-class students provide guidance and knowledge for freshman to evaluate themselves and find their drive in high school and beyond.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 3, 10

Topic(s): Community Members, Workshops/Classes/Discussion Group

Honoree: Henry Sibley High School, Mendota Heights

Main Contact: Mr. Benjamin Geiger, Benjamin.geiger@isd197.org

PRINCIPLE 4: Creates a caring community.

► Action for Reaction

Action for Reaction is a student-led practice that promotes positive mental and chemical health awareness and choices in collaboration with North Memorial Hospital. They work in conjunction with our other student organizations to help support positive decision-making practices and leadership in their community.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 5

Topic(s): Community Members, Leadership Groups, Service to Community/Service Learning

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: Maple Grove Senior High, Maple Grove

Main Contact: Sara Vernig, vernigs@district279.org

► All School Lip Dub

Each year students and staff participate together in an all-school “lip dub” set to popular music. Each advisory is assigned a specific part of the song and place in the hallway to be part of the video. Students and staff meet for the last part of the video for a whole-school group session. The schoolwide activity helps advisories to bond with each other and provides students with a sense of belonging and tradition.

Grade Level(s): 6–8

Principle(s) Implemented: 4

Year Honored: 2023

Honoree: Woodbury Middle School

Main Contact: Josh Eidem, jeidem@sowashco.org

► Anti-Bullying Owing Up

Owing Up gives students the tools they need to deal with gossip, rumors, exclusion and any other type of bullying that occurs in middle school.

Grade Level(s): Middle School

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 5

Topic(s): Bullying/Peer Cruelty Prevention

Year Honored: 2012

Honoree: Coon Rapids Middle School, Coon Rapids

Main Contact: Lisa Torbenson, lisa.torbenson@anoka.k12.mn.us

► Art-A-Thon

An extended, late night event that provides 6th grade students the opportunity to create engaging art projects and participate in relationship building activities while providing a service to the school. Projects are sold and proceeds used to purchase new technology for the elementary art program.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 6

Topic(s): Engaging/Interactive Curriculum, Relationship Building, Service to School/School Beautification

Year Honored: 2014

Sibley East Elementary, Gaylord

Main Contact: Amanda Feterl, afeterl@sibley-east.k12.mn.us

► Begindergarten

Begindergarten provides students with a safe and welcoming environment during their first experience with school to ensure a successful start for everyone. An altered schedule is combined with small-group activities that provide teachers with significant information about each student's current academic and social-emotional functioning while introducing

every student to all of the adults in the building. Routines and expectations are modeled, taught and re-taught until all students are successful.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 4

Topic(s): Orientations/Welcoming

Honoree: Red Lake Early Childhood Center, Red Lake

Main Contact: Dustin Hinckley, dhinckley@redlake.k12.mn.us

► **Buddy Time**

The goal of the practice is to build strong, lasting relationships between students at various Grade Level(s). Buddy Time emphasizes caring for others, as older students mentor the younger students.

Grade Level(s): Mixed

Principle(s) Implemented: 4

Topic(s): Mentoring, Relationship Building

Year Honored: 2013

Honoree: School for All Seasons, Isanti

Main Contact: Sara Edwards, sedwards@cambridge.k12.mn.us

► **Caring for Our Community**

A month of activities completed to give back to their community or someone in their school that is facing a challenge.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 4

Topic(s): Service to Community/Service Learning

Year Honored: 2011

Honoree: Shirley Hills Primary, Mound

Main Contact: Ann Swanson, swansona@westonka.k12.mn.us

► **Celebrating Diversity: A Minnesota Twins partnership**

Lakes International Language Academy, a K-6 language immersion school, partners with the Minnesota Twins to celebrate diversity, inspire international-mindedness and build cross-cultural communities.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 4, 10

Topic(s): Social Issues/Diversity/Tolerance

Year Honored: 2012

Honoree: Lakes International Language Academy, Forest Lake

Main Contact: Julie Lundgren, jlundgren@lakesinternational.org

► **Core Value Jamboree**

The Core Value Jamboree is an intentional opportunity for students to apply understanding of core values, bully prevention, and the school motto of be safe, kind, and responsible to real life situations.

Grade Level(s): Mixed

Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 4

Topic(s): Differentiation/Performance Character, Bullying/Peer Cruelty Prevention, Teaching/Learning of Core Values

Year Honored: 2017

Honoree: North Star Academy, Duluth

Main Contact: Tammy Rackliffe, tammy.rackliffe@duluthedison.com

► **Don't Count Crayons — Value Yourself & Others**

This practice combines homeroom curriculum with a school assembly to promote the "Bluejay Way" expectations of respecting yourself, others, property and learning. Students reflected on a video, drew visuals of what they valued about themselves and created homeroom murals which were included as part of a video presentation at an assembly celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday.

Grade Level(s): Middle School, High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 4

Topic(s): Assemblies, Relationship Building, Teaching/Learning of Core Values

Year Honored: 2013

Honoree: Waseca Junior & Senior High, Waseca

Main Contact: Jeanne Swanson, swaj@waseca.k12.mn.us

► **Emergency Plan Packets**

Service learning course students researched the topic of deportation and developed a project that would not be intrusive yet would be a legitimate help to families who are under the stress of deportation. They created emergency plan packets that list helpful local and state resources and how to access them, fill-in-the-blank style information that could help the family in case of emergency, and concise cards stating their rights under the constitution.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 10

Topic(s): Assessment & Action, Relationship Building, Service to Community/Service Learning

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: Northfield High School, Northfield

Main Contact: Sarah Swan McDonald, sarah.swanmcdonald@nfld.k12.mn

► **Family Life Groups**

Instructional school-wide intent to foster a caring culture, by encouraging respectful relationships through microcosm, student-led groups that emphasize vibrant and inclusive relationships.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 9

Topic(s): Leadership Groups, Mentoring, Orientations/Welcoming

Year Honored: 2015

Honoree: Concordia Academy, Roseville

Main Contact: Tim Berner, tim.berner@concordiaacademy.com

► **Family Service Event**

Lower School students, grades preK-5, work with Upper School students, agency leaders and teachers to organize and run a Family Service Event on Campus. Ten stations are set up with hands on service projects focusing on the issues of hunger, homelessness, health, the elderly, education and animals.

Grade Level(s): Mixed

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 5

Topic(s): Community Members, Leadership Groups, Service to Community/Service Learning

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: The Blake Lower School, Wayzata

Main Contact: Nan Peterson, npeterson@blakeschool.org

► **Feminism Club**

A student led club empowering members to identify and combat systems of oppression within their school and larger community through social action and engaged citizenship. Club members are in grades 9-12.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 5

Topic(s): Engaging/Interactive Curriculum, Social Issues/Diversity/Tolerance, Student Autonomy/Empowerment

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: Avalon School, St. Paul

Main Contact: Gretchen Sage-Martinson, gretchen@avalonschool.org

► **Hangout and Read**

High schoolers took a leadership role to improve reading skills of elementary students using technology.

Grade Level(s): Mixed

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 5

Topic(s): Academics, Leadership Groups, Relationship Building

Year Honored: 2017

Honoree: Tri-City United Schools, Montgomery

Main Contact: Joey Wollenburg, jwollenburg@tcu2905.us

► **Home Visits**

Community of Peace Academy teachers visit the homes of their students each year to meet with parents and to set academic, physical and character goals.

Grade Level(s): Mixed

Principle(s) Implemented: 4

Topic(s): Orientations/Welcoming, Parents & Grandparents

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: Community of Peace Academy, St. Paul

Main Contact: Cara Quinn, caraq@cpa.charter.k12.mn.us

► **How Can We Impact Another Generation?**

A service-learning project built intergenerational relationships between students and seniors. Students, after reflecting on how they can make an impact on the older generation, interviewed seniors, identified needs and created a plan to celebrate the lives of the seniors they met through books, plays and video productions.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 10

Topic(s): Community Members, Service to Community/Service Learning, Student Autonomy/Empowerment

Year Honored: 2015

Honoree: Orchard Lake Elementary School, Impact Academy, Lakeville

Main Contact: Marilynn Smith, Marilynn.smith@asd194.org

► **Implementing Social Emotional Learning Curriculum**

Using multiple social emotional learning models, a curriculum was developed and is being implemented during advisory period to enhance students' personal responsibility. Students plan service activities to give back to the community and are working to ensure there is a respectful and welcoming atmosphere for new students.

Grade Level(s): 9–12

Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 4

Topic(s): Teen Programs/Personal Responsibility, Behavior Management/Positive Discipline, Community Members

Year Honored: 2018

Honoree: Northfield Area Learning Center, Northfield

Main Contact: Daryl Kehler, dkeher@northfieldschools.org

► **Kids Club**

Kids Club is our school-wide, K-5, practice which brings our school together as a community. It is a staple to our program with the goal of building strong, lasting relationships between grade level(s).

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 4

Topic(s): Social Recognition/Sportsmanship

Year Honored: 2010

Honoree: School for All Seasons, Isanti

Main Contact: Sara Edwards, sedwards@cambridge.k12.mn.us

► **Kids Helping Kids**

This project is designed to highlight the importance of giving to and/or serving others. The program goal is to spark a lifelong participation in community service projects. The entire school community makes and donates items to a local children's hospital each year. Students and the community are both greatly impacted.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 4, 10

Topic(s): Service to Community/Service Learning

Year Honored: 2009

Honoree: Schumann Elementary, Orono

Main Contact: Dr. Connie Fladeland, cfladeland@orono.k12.mn.us

► **KoMet PRIDE**

KoMet PRIDE is a positive school-wide behavior program that strives to create a safe, welcoming and respectful school climate where students learn responsible behaviors and develop strong character. It centers around ideas that will help students be successful at school and in life (Practice respect and responsibility; Remain safe; Include others; Display a positive attitude; Engage in learning).

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 4

Topic(s): Behavior Management/Positive Discipline, Bullying/Peer Cruelty Prevention, Relationship Building

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: Kasson-Mantorville Elementary School, Kasson

Main Contact: Karen Besch, Karen Besch: k.besch@komets.k12.mn.us

► **Laker Proud Groups**

Laker Proud Groups provide guidance and support for students and build lasting relationships between students and staff at all grade levels. Multi-age groups of students meet once a month with 1–2 staff members for specific character-building

lessons and activities. Groups stay together during their years at elementary school. The practice has shown growth in building friendships, social skills, confidence, a growth mindset, and reducing and standing up against bullying.

Grade Level(s): K–4

Principle(s) Implemented: 3, 4

Topic(s): Mentoring; Relationship Building

Honoree: Winsted and Humphrey Elementary Schools, Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted School District

Main Contact: Laura Heuer, lheuer@hlww.k12.mn.us

► **Letters of Address in the Circles of Influence**

Poems of address are written to the victim, bully and all the members of the circle of influence and then the poems were used in an eighth grade led assembly for students in grades 7-12 on Martin Luther King's Birthday.

Grade Level(s): Middle School, High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 3, 4, 6

Topic(s): Bullying/Peer Cruelty Prevention, Engaging/Interactive Curriculum, Relationship Building

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: Waseca Junior & Senior High School, Waseca

Main Contact: Jeanette Swanson, Jeanette Swanson: swaj@waseca.k12.mn.us

► **LILA Rocks!: Inclusivity Rock Garden – A Community Project**

Each student in grades K–5 paint a stone in a way that represents themselves as a unique and special member of the LILA community, Forest Lake community, the United States, and the world. The rocks were placed in a path leading to the school's entrance as a daily reminder and symbolic display of the school's sense of community and core values in a way that can be easily seen, understood, and discussed by all students, staff, and visitors. Prior to painting the rocks, students learn about community, collaboration, inclusivity, diversity, and what makes each person unique and special.

Grade Level(s): Mixed

Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 4

Topic(s): Core Values: Teaching, Learning or Visual Display, Social Issues/Diversity/Tolerance

Honoree: Lakes International Language Academy — Forest Lake

Main Contact: Tracy Maurer, tmaurer@mylila.org

► **LILA's Thumb-Tree Painting**

At a community-wide celebration, students, parents, staff and community members each made a fingerprint leaf on a pre-painted tree to symbolize the importance of individuals putting their "fingerprints" on the school and contributing to the school community's continued growth.

Grade Level(s): Mixed

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 10

Topic(s): Parents & Grandparents, Relationship Building, Visual Display of Core Values,

Year Honored: 2015

Honoree: Lakes International Language Academy, Forest Lake

Main Contact: Tracy Maurer, tmaurer@mylila.org

► **MNOHS Peer Leaders Program**

MNOHS Peer Leaders Program pairs experienced students with incoming 9th grade and transfer students. Peer Leaders assist new students with the transition to online learning and help connect them to the school community. Participants gather both online and in-person during the school year for character education and social activities.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 4

Topic(s): Leadership

Year Honored: 2021

Honoree: Minnesota Online High School, St. Paul

Main Contact: Amanda Seelen, a.seelen@mail.mnohs.org

► **Overnight Leadership Conference**

The Overnight Leadership Conference engages grades 7-12 students in a variety of student-led leadership workshops, peer-mentoring activities, and teamwork exercises to promote a positive and supportive community of learners.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 9

Topic(s): Mentoring, Relationship Building, Student Autonomy/Empowerment

Year Honored: 2015

Honoree: AFSA High School, Vadnais Heights

Main Contact: Liz Burkwald, lburkwald@afsahighschool.com

► **Photo Display of Adult Helpers**

All adult staff member's photos and roles are displayed on the walls of the school, year round. An important part of feeling supported is to know one another and this practice helps our school community know and welcome one another.

Grade Level(s): Mixed

Principle(s) Implemented: 4

Topic(s): Orientations/Welcoming, Relationship Building

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: Lakes International Language Academy, Forest Lake

Main Contact: Shannon Peterson, speterson@lakesinternational.org

► **Postcards from the Pandemic**

This is a weekly schoolwide journaling practice to form connections and provide support for the school community during distance learning. Students share descriptions of their lives during the pandemic, reflect on their emotional states, and describe strategies they are using to express and regulate those emotions, kindness challenges and goal-setting. A weekly form allows students to reach out and ask for an adult or other person to check on them.

Grade Level(s): 6–8

Principle(s) Implemented: 4

Year Honored: 2022

Honoree: Duluth Edison Charter Schools North Star Junior Academy

Main Contact: Elissa Hoole, elissa.hoole@duluthedison.com

► **Project Sidekick**

A student created and led in-house mentoring program with meaningful matches between high school and middle school students, leading after-school activities for the pairs. The Northfield Public Schools, Connected Kids Program, provided support for project.

Grade Level(s): Middle School, High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 9

Topic(s): Bullying/Peer Cruelty Prevention, Mentoring

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: Arcadia Charter School, Northfield

Main Contact: Lisa Malecha, lmalecha@arcadiacharterschool.org

► **Project-Based Learning within an Advisory System**

Avalon students are placed in multi-aged advisories that serve as their home base as they work to create projects that will earn them credits and standards on their way to graduation.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 4

Topic(s): Class Meeting/Cooperative Learning, Relationship Building

Year Honored: 2012

Honoree: Avalon School, St. Paul

Main Contact: Gretchen Sage-Martinson, gretchen@avalonschool.org

► **Promoting Peace Across the Grade Level(s)**

Each student is in a cross grade level peace group that meets on a monthly basis focusing on a specific topic and engaging in activities that promotes peace building and positive relationships.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 4

Topic(s): Bullying/Peer Cruelty Prevention, Relationship Building, Service to Community/Service Learning

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: Cowern Elementary School, North St. Paul

Main Contact: Cindy Piersdorf or Mary Glagavs, cpiersdorf@isd622.org or mglagavs@isd622.org

► **Reading Activators**

Reading Activators is a student-led literacy program designed to provide individualized reading support and coaching to kindergarten and first grade students. Fourth and fifth grade students apply to become activators, receive training, get paired with a younger student and meet daily for 10 minutes to provide support on reading skills that needing strengthening, encouragement in the area of reading or general enrichment. The practice fosters bonds between younger and older students, cultivates leadership skills in older students and helps younger students become better readers.

Grade Level(s): K–5

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 5

Topic(s): Academics; Mentoring

Honoree: DECS Raleigh Academy, Duluth

Main Contact: Bonnie Jorgenson, bonnie.jorgenson@duluthedison.com

► **R.O.C.K. Stars – Responsible, Outstanding, Caring, Knowledgeable Students and Staff**

R.O.C.K.S. (Responsible, Outstanding, Caring, Knowledgeable Students and Staff) is the school theme for a whole school approach to character development. The theme is carried out through monthly assemblies, classroom teaching and student reflection time. Students, staff and parents have a common language to use and better understanding about what is good character.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 4

Topic(s): Assemblies, Class Meeting/Cooperative Learning, Teaching/Learning of Core Values

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: Hilltop Primary School, Minnetrista

Main Contact: Nancy Benz, benzn@westonka.k12.mn.us

► **Random Acts**

In conjunction with the monthly school theme of "Caring," sixth grade students identify and perform a "Random Act of Kindness" in the community. Afterwards, they reflect and write about the experience and do a presentation.

Grade Level(s): Mixed

Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 4

Topic(s): Engaging/Interactive Curriculum, Relationship Building, Visual Display of Core Values

Year Honored: 2016

Honoree: IJ Holton Intermediate School, Austin

Main Contact: David Brown, david.brown@austin.k12.mn.us

► **ReadBrave: A school-wide book club**

Avalon high school students teamed with St. Paul Public Libraries and the author A.S. King to read and discuss Everybody Sees the Ants, her young adult novel that deals with issues of bullying and depression. Students recorded public service announcements about bullying and published them on social media sites, created art inspired by the book and participated in writing workshops.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 4

Topic(s): Bullying/Peer Cruelty Prevention, Integration into Curriculum, Social Issues/Diversity/Tolerance

Year Honored: 2013

Honoree: Avalon School, St. Paul

Main Contact: Gretchen Sage-Martinson, gretchen@avalonschool.org

► **Soup Supper Night**

The first grade classes hold a unique celebration called 'We All Eat Soup' in which families bring soups and breads and share an evening meal as a celebration of what they have learned in their unit entitled 'We are all the same/we are all different.'

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 10

Topic(s): Engaging/Interactive Curriculum, Social Issues/Diversity/Tolerance

Year Honored: 2010

Honoree: Lakes International Language Academy, Forest Lake

► **Student-Led Orientation and Peer Mentor Program**

Avalon's 10-12th grade students organize a student orientation where they welcome new students to their project-based program and throughout September act as mentors to the new students.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 4

Topic(s): Mentoring, Orientations/Welcoming, Relationship Building

Year Honored: 2016

Honoree: Avalon School, St. Paul

Main Contact: Nora Whalen, nora@avalonschool.org

► Talking Circles

Students learn empathy and practice social skills by participating in discussions inspired by Native American traditions.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 4

Topic(s): Class Meeting/Cooperative Learning

Year Honored: 2008

Honoree: Lake Park-Audubon Elementary School, Audubon

Main Contact: Jennifer Heggestuen, jlindstrom@lpa.k12.mn.us

► The Big K . . . Kindness

After brainstorming ways to verbalize, recognize, and reward acts of kindness, the team presented a new theme and motto to the total staff, which whole-heartedly approved it by unanimous vote. The motto that has been the guiding principle for our efforts is: At Horace May, We Practice the Big...Kindness. The theme that governs every character initiative is, of course, kindness.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 4

Topic(s): Relationship Building

Year Honored: 2010

Honoree: Horace May Elementary School, Bemidji

Main Contact: William Burwell, bburwell@bemidji.k12.mn.us

► Unity Week

Unity Week was inspired by PACER's idea of coming together as a community against bullying and stand united for kindness, acceptance and inclusion. All students participate in activities and discussions centered around the topic of unity and how, as a school, they can create a welcoming community for all. Students learn about the character traits of kindness, acceptance and inclusion and identify how they will exemplify these traits in their lives. Through this practice, students gain a deeper perspective of how their actions affect others and are an outward display of their character.

Grade Level(s): K-8

Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 4

Topic(s): Bullying/Peer Cruelty Prevention; Social Issues/Diversity/Tolerance

Honoree: Cologne Academy, Cologne

Main Contact: Dr. Lynn Peterson, lpeterson@cologneacademy.org

► Wednesday Schedule

Every Wednesday, the school has an alternate schedule where the students implement experiential learning strategies. The students select activities that interest them from knitting, service learning to mentoring. The goal is to provide a safe, welcoming, and respectful environment that shows the students they are cared for and valued.

Grade Level(s): 9-12

Principle(s) Implemented: 4

Year Honored: 2023

Honoree: Northfield Area Learning Center

Main Contact: Daryl Kehler, dkeehler@northfieldschools.org

► Winter Bash Day of Service

Winter Bash Day of Service is an event where all 9-12 grade students find or are placed in a service project. Students are released from school for an afternoon of volunteerism. The goal for students is to find value in donating time to others.

Grade Level(s): 9-12

Principle(s) Implemented: 4

Year Honored: 2023

Honoree: Pine Island High School

Main Contact: Angela Organ, AOrgan@pineisland.k12.mn.us

PRINCIPLE 5: Provides students with opportunities for moral action.

► Action for Reaction

Action for Reaction is a student-led practice that promotes positive mental and chemical health awareness and choices in collaboration with North Memorial Hospital. They works in conjunction with our other student organizations to help support positive decision-making practices and leadership in their community.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 5

Topic(s): Community Members, Leadership Groups, Service to Community/Service Learning

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: Maple Grove Senior High, Maple Grove

Main Contact: Sara Vernig, vernigs@district279.org

► **Anti-Bullying Owning Up**

Owning Up gives students the tools they need to deal with gossip, rumors, exclusion and any other type of bullying that occurs in middle school.

Grade Level(s): Middle School

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 5

Topic(s): Bullying/Peer Cruelty Prevention

Year Honored: 2012

Honoree: Coon Rapids Middle School, Coon Rapids

Main Contact: Lisa Torbenson, lisa.torbenson@anoka.k12.mn.us

► **Art Department Connection**

Art instructors developed two opportunities to make connections to the community – Valentines for donors at a local Red Cross Blood Drive and bookmarks for the public library children’s department.

Grade Level(s): Middle School

Principle(s) Implemented: 5

Topic(s): Service to Community/Service Learning

Year Honored: 2009

Honoree: Ellis Middle School, Austin

Main Contact: Cathy Cooper, ccooper@austin.k12.mn.us

► **Backpack Program**

Students in the Job Skills class and National Junior Honor Society serve their community and develop leadership skills by collaborating weekly to pack and distribute backpacks filled with supplemental nourishment for students at Ellis. The practice is a collaboration between the school and the Salvation Army.

Grade Level(s): Middle School

Principle(s) Implemented: 5, 9

Topic(s): Mentoring, Service to Community/Service Learning, Staff Development/Student Leadership

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: Ellis Middle School, Austin

Main Contact: Jennifer Gosha, Jennifer.gosha@austin.k12.mn.us

► **Books for Babies**

Ellis Middle School Students collected new books for new babies born in Austin.

Grade Level(s): Middle School

Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 5

Topic(s): Service to Community/Service Learning

Year Honored: 2012

Honoree: Ellis Middle School, Austin

Main Contact: David Brown, david.brown@austin.k12.mn.us

► **Caring & Giving: Food Drive**

The Caring & Giving Food Drive actively connects children to those in need by working together to earn money; to purchase food; and to shop for items which are then delivered to those in need.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 5

Topic(s): Service to Community/Service Learning

Year Honored: 2012

Honoree: Primrose School of Savage, Savage

Main Contact: Doug Storbeck, dstorbeck@primrosesavage.com

► **Ellis NJHS Contributes Globally**

NJHS builds compassion and caring within their school by conducting a shoe drive, which benefits those in need and provides funds for a service learning activity.

Grade Level(s): Middle School

Principle(s) Implemented: 5, 7

Topic(s): Leadership Groups, Service to Community/Service Learning, Visual Display of Core Values

Year Honored: 2015

Honoree: Ellis Middle School, Austin

Main Contact: Jennifer Gosha, Jennifer.gosha@austin.k12.mn.us

► **EXCEL Program**

Middle school students prepare and deliver character lessons based on the six pillars of character to kindergartners students.

Grade Level(s): Elementary, Middle School

Principle(s) Implemented: 5

Topic(s): Mentoring, Teaching/Learning of Core Values

Year Honored: 2008

Honoree: Ellis Middle School, Austin

Main Contact: Cathy Cooper, ccooper@austin.k12.mn.us

► **Family Service Event**

Lower School students, grades preK-5, work with Upper School students, agency leaders and teachers to organize and run a Family Service Event on Campus. Ten stations are set up with hands on service projects focusing on the issues of hunger, homelessness, health, the elderly, education and animals.

Grade Level(s): Mixed

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 5

Topic(s): Community Members, Leadership Groups, Service to Community/Service Learning

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: The Blake Lower School, Wayzata

Main Contact: Nan Peterson, npeterson@blakeschool.org

► **Farm and Community Service Day**

Twice a year students and staff at the Academy for Science and Agriculture (AFSA) High School travel to community farms, parks, camps and businesses to assist with manual labor projects.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 5, 10

Topic(s): Community Members, Relationship Building, Service to Community/Service Learning

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: AFSA High School, Vadnais Heights

Main Contact: Alexis Katzer or Marlee Mollet, akatzer@afsahighschool.com or mmollet@afsahighschool.com

► **Feminism Club**

A student led club empowering members to identify and combat systems of oppression within their school and larger community through social action and engaged citizenship. Club members are in grades 9-12.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 5

Topic(s): Engaging/Interactive Curriculum, Social Issues/Diversity/Tolerance, Student Autonomy/Empowerment

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: Avalon School, St. Paul

Main Contact: Gretchen Sage-Martinson, gretchen@avalonschool.org

► **Hangout and Read**

High schoolers took a leadership role to improve reading skills of elementary students using technology.

Grade Level(s): Mixed

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 5

Topic(s): Academics, Leadership Groups, Relationship Building

Year Honored: 2017

Honoree: Tri-City United Schools, Montgomery

Main Contact: Joey Wollenburg, jwollenburg@tcu2905.us

► **Henry Sibley Students Against Destructive Decisions (S.A.D.D.)**

S.A.D.D. empowers young people to help each other make healthy life choices. The group investigated and implemented educational, positive and creative ways to bring information to the student body about e-cigarettes, texting and driving, drug usage, energy drinks, and relationship violence.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 5

Topic(s): Assessment & Action, Social Issues/Diversity/Tolerance, Teen Programs/Personal Responsibility

Year Honored: 2015

Honoree: Henry Sibley High School, Mendota Heights

Main Contact: Ann L. Lindberg, ann.lindberg@isd197.org

► **Homecoming Service Day**

This school had many activities promoting community engagement and service. Bullying prevention programs, speakers supporting character education and a “Homecoming Service Day” where students give back to the community are a few examples of the great things happening at Waseca High School.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 5

Topic(s): Service to Community/Service Learning, Service to School/School Beautification

Year Honored: 2009

Honoree: Waseca High School, Waseca

Main Contact: Jeanne Swanson, swaj@waseca.k12.mn.us

► **Junior Class Days of Service**

Community of Peace Academy’s junior class spends three days rotating between volunteering with Habitat for Humanity and doing service projects in collaboration with elementary grade levels. The goals of the practice are to inspire service in elementary students, expose juniors to a variety of service opportunities so they will continue volunteering into adulthood, develop leadership skills in the junior class, build relationships among elementary and high school students, and support those in need in the community.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 5

Topic(s): Service to Community/Service Learning

Honoree: Community of Peace Academy, St. Paul

Main Contact: Ms. Sadie Fischer, sadief@cpapk12.org

► **Northfield Area Learning Center Backpack Food program**

A program providing food to those in need, while teaching students empathy, caring and responsibility.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 5

Topic(s): Service to Community/Service Learning

Year Honored: 2016

Honoree: Northfield Area Learning Center, Northfield

Main Contact: Cheryl Mathison, cmathison@northfieldschools.org

► **Raleigh’s Veterans Day Program**

Raleigh Academy’s annual Veterans Day program honors area service members as students learn about respect, responsibility and how the holiday fits with the school’s core values. The program includes music, technology projects, and readings by the students.

Grade Level(s): K–8

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 5

Topic(s): Service to Community/Service Learning, Integration into Curriculum, Teaching/Learning of Core Values

Year Honored: 2018

Honoree: Raleigh Academy, Duluth

Main Contact: Danielle Perich, Danielle.perich@duluthedison.com

► **Reading Activators**

Reading Activators is a student-led literacy program designed to provide individualized reading support and coaching to kindergarten and first grade students. Fourth and fifth grade students apply to become activators, receive training, get paired with a younger student and meet daily for 10 minutes to provide support on reading skills that needing strengthening, encouragement in the area of reading or general enrichment. The practice fosters bonds between younger and older students, cultivates leadership skills in older students and helps younger students become better readers.

Grade Level(s): K–5

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 5

Topic(s): Academics; Mentoring

Honoree: DECS Raleigh Academy, Duluth

Main Contact: Bonnie Jorgenson, bonnie.jorgenson@duluthedison.com

► **School Wide Read**

All students read or listen to a novel that helps create a culture of empathy and compassion. School-wide activities are connected to this read aloud including a toy drive.

Grade Level(s): Middle School

Principle(s) Implemented: 5

Topic(s): Service to Community/Service Learning, Social Issues/Diversity/Tolerance

Year Honored: 2016

Honoree: Ellis Middle School, Austin

Main Contact: Kristi Kreun and Julie Walski, kristi.kreun@austin.k12.mn.us

► **Six Billion Paths to Peace**

This is an effort to inspire people to focus on interconnectedness and to reflect upon the individual service contributions that each of us can make to a more harmonious world. There are six billion people in the world. Any act of service is an act of peace. The goal of the initiative is to inspire the Blake community to more mindful acts of service.

Grade Level(s): Mixed

Principle(s) Implemented: 5

Topic(s): Service to Community/Service Learning, Student Autonomy/Empowerment

Year Honored: 2009

Honoree: The Blake School, Hopkins

Main Contact: Nan Peterson, npeterson@blakeschool.org

► **Soy Scents Candle Company**

A school based non-profit business operated by students who make and market soy candles and soaps, donating all profits to the Northfield food shelf.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 5

Topic(s): Service to Community/Service Learning

Year Honored: 2011

Honoree: Northfield Area Learning Center, Northfield

Main Contact: Cheryl Mathison, cheryl.mathison@nfld.k12.mn.us

► **Stomp Out Bullying At North Junior High**

“Stomp Out Bullying” is a program that empowers students as leaders in their school to build an awareness of bully behavior and how to “stomp it out” by making students and staff aware of what it is and how to deal with bullying. Activities have included a video, announcements, advisory activities, student research and surveys, and an Anti-Bullying Pledge Ribbon in each room.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 3, 5

Topic(s): Bullying/Peer Cruelty Prevention, Staff Development/Student Leadership, Teaching/Learning of Core Values

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: North Junior High School, St. Cloud

Main Contact: Karlyn Doyle, karlyn.doyle@isd742.org

► **The Action Cycle**

Students and staff apply the Action Cycle—Choose, Act, Reflect—to decision-making, units of inquiry, and social learning to the benefit of both academic and character development.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 5

Topic(s): Assessment & Action

Year Honored: 2011

Honoree: Lakes International Language Academy, Forest Lake

Main Contact: Julie Lundgren, jlundgren@lakesinternational.org

► **Wheaton Area Pay It Forward Homeroom Project**

Through an anonymous donation, the school gave each homeroom an amount of money and challenged them to grow the amount through projects and activities to benefit a local or global organization.

Grade Level(s): Middle, High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 5, 7

Topic(s): Service to Community/Service Learning, Social Issues/Diversity/Tolerance

Year Honored: 2017

Honoree: Wheaton Area Middle/High School, Wheaton

Main Contact: Martin Lanter, mlanter@wheaton.k12.mn.us

PRINCIPLE 6: Offers a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character and helps them to succeed.

► **Art-A-Thon**

An extended, late night event that provides 6th grade students the opportunity to create engaging art projects and participate in relationship building activities while providing a service to the school. Projects are sold and proceeds used to purchase new technology for the elementary art program.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 6

Topic(s): Engaging/Interactive Curriculum, Relationship Building, Service to School/School Beautification

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: Sibley East Elementary, Gaylor

Main Contact: Amanda Feterl, afeterl@sibley-east.k12.mn.us

► **Gardening Project-Based Learning**

Through an on-campus garden, students work cooperatively to beautify the campus, learn the science behind gardening, and produce food that can be shared with everyone. The practice instills pride and ownership in the students, builds community, increases collaboration and autonomy in and between students, and engages students in mastering the state's learning standards.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 6, 7

Topic(s): Assessment, Curriculum

Honoree: Hennepin Gateway to College — Eden Prairie

Main Contact: Mr. Joe Millard, jpmillard@district287.org

► **Job Interview Speeches**

Seniors in Public Speaking class think about the future career they want to have and then research open job listings in that field. They prepare for different kinds of interview questions they may face for that career and plan how they will respond. Classmates hold a mock interview for them as they prepare to apply for their dream job.

Grade Level(s): 12

Principle(s) Implemented: 6

Year Honored: 2023

Honoree: Community of Peace Academy

Main Contact: Sadie Fischer, sadief@cpapk12.org

► **Letters of Address in the Circles of Influence**

Poems of address are written to the victim, bully and all the members of the circle of influence and then the poems were used in an eighth grade led assembly for students in grades 7-12 on Martin Luther King's Birthday.

Grade Level(s): Middle School, High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 3, 4, 6

Topic(s): Bullying/Peer Cruelty Prevention, Engaging/Interactive Curriculum, Relationship Building

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: Waseca Junior & Senior High School, Waseca

Main Contact: Jeanette Swanson, Jeanette Swanson: swaj@waseca.k12.mn.us

► **Macalester College Roundtable**

Avalon School partners with Macalester College to learn about and participate in the college's annual International Roundtable. To prepare for the Roundtable, students attend a seminar three times a week for the quarter prior to the event. Preparation includes learning more about the Roundtable theme, touring the college campus, discussion with Macalester students, and attending a college lecture. Students gain confidence in discussing challenging topics, learn about college and develop communication skills.

Grade Level(s): Secondary

Principle(s) Implemented: 6

Topic(s): Academics, Student Autonomy Empowerment
Honoree: Avalon School, St. Paul
Main Contact: Mr. Kevin Ward, kevin@avalonschool.org

► **Student to Student Mentoring**

Student to Student Mentoring is a proactive approach to ensuring academic and socioemotional growth of students.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 6

Topic(s): Service to Community/Service Learning

Year Honored: 2010

Honoree: Bamber Valley Elementary School, Rochester

Main Contact: Kris Davidson, KRDAVIDSON@rochester.k12.mn.us

PRINCIPLE 7: Fosters students' self-motivation.

► **Class Theme Video – Make Mistakes**

The class focused on how mistakes can lead to better learning. Students assisted in writing, recording and acting in a music video, "Make Mistakes." <http://goo.gl/Q39m4L>

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 7

Topic(s): Academics, Behavior Management/Positive Discipline, Student Autonomy/Empowerment

Year Honored: 2015

Honoree: Bridges Community School, Mankato

Main Contact: Briana Miller, bmille2@isd77.k12.mn.us

► **Ellis NJHS Contributes Globally**

NJHS builds compassion and caring within their school by conducting a shoe drive, which benefits those in need and provides funds for a service learning activity.

Grade Level(s): Middle School

Principle(s) Implemented: 5, 7

Topic(s): Leadership Groups, Service to Community/Service Learning, Visual Display of Core Values

Year Honored: 2015

Honoree: Ellis Middle School, Austin

Main Contact: Jennifer Gosha, Jennifer.gosha@austin.k12.mn.us

► **Ellis Student Groups POWER UP!**

The POWER UP groups meet weekly to discuss struggles, assets and set goals towards making positive choices and persevering through challenges.

Grade Level(s): Middle School

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 7

Topic(s): Academics, Class Meeting/Cooperative Learning, Leadership Groups

Year Honored: 2016

Honoree: Ellis Middle School, Austin

Main Contact: Jennifer Gosha, Jennifer.gosha@austin.k12.mn.us

► **Fair Trade at Loyola Catholic School**

The school educates its students and surrounding community members on the importance of Fair Trade and the social justice issues surrounding it. They make available Fair Trade products and organize events to promote and educate others about Fair Trade.

Grade Level(s): Mixed

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 7

Topic(s): Class Meeting/Cooperative Learning, Social Issues/Diversity/Tolerance, Student Autonomy/Empowerment

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: Loyola Catholic School, Mankato

Main Contact: Samuel Cotton, scotton@loyolacatholicschool.org

► Gardening Project-Based Learning

Through an on-campus garden, students work cooperatively to beautify the campus, learn the science behind gardening, and produce food that can be shared with everyone. The practice instills pride and ownership in the students, builds community, increases collaboration and autonomy in and between students, and engages students in mastering the state's learning standards.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 6, 7

Topic(s): Assessment, Curriculum

Honoree: Hennepin Gateway to College — Eden Prairie

Main Contact: Mr. Joe Millard, jpmillard@district287.org

► Mental Warriors Club

Mental Warriors is a club of students at St. Peter High School who aspire to grow their mindset, show empathy to others, and discover strategies and techniques to better equip themselves to handle the stresses of teenage life. The club focuses on how a growth mindset coupled with perspective can help students thrive.

Grade Level(s): 9–12

Principle(s) Implemented: 7

Year Honored: 2022

Honoree: St. Peter High School

Main Contact: Sean Keating, keatingsean4@gmail.com

► Pledge for Change

Orono Middle School incorporated the “Pledge for Change” reflective activity in its advisory program. Advisors worked with students in the creation of their own personal pledge for change. Pledges are proudly displayed and reminders of honoring pledges are interspersed throughout the school community.

Grade Level(s): Middle School

Principle(s) Implemented: 7

Topic(s): Student Autonomy Empowerment, Teaching/Learning of Core Values

Year Honored: 2009

Honoree: Orono Middle School, Orono

Main Contact: Kristine Flesher, kflesher@orono.k12.mn.us

► The Effort Campaign

The Effort Campaign is a natural extension of ISD 625 School District's Principles of Learning: Organizing for Effort and Self-Management of Learning. The main goal is to increase student effort on all tasks. The objective is to increase student achievement, student self-confidence and self-perseverance for all students at all ability levels.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 3, 7

Topic(s): Teen Programs/Personal Responsibility

Year Honored: 2010

Honoree: Phalen Lake Hmong Studies Magnet School, St. Paul

Main Contact: Catherine Rich, catherine.rich@spps.org

► The Service Paths: Reflection and Recognition

Service Paths: Reflection and Recognition is a program that recognizes students who have provided one hundred public service hours in one year and shared their related reflection with others.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 7

Topic(s): Service to Community/Service Learning

Year Honored: 2011

Honoree: The Blake School, Minneapolis

Main Contact: Lisa Sackreiter, lsackreiter@blakeschool.org

► Wheaton Area Pay It Forward Homeroom Project

Through an anonymous donation, the school gave each homeroom an amount of money and challenged them to grow the amount through projects and activities to benefit a local or global organization.

Grade Level(s): Middle, High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 5, 7

Topic(s): Service to Community/Service Learning, Social Issues/Diversity/Tolerance

Year Honored: 2017

Honoree: Wheaton Area Middle/High School, Wheaton

Main Contact: Martin Lanter, mlanter@wheaton.k12.mn.us

PRINCIPLE 8: All staff share the responsibility for developing, implementing and modeling ethical character.

No Minnesota Promising Practices currently awarded for Principle 8

PRINCIPLE 9: The character initiative has shared moral leadership and long-range support for continuous improvement.

► **Backpack Program**

Students in the Job Skills class and National Junior Honor Society serve their community and develop leadership skills by collaborating weekly to pack and distribute backpacks filled with supplemental nourishment for students at Ellis. The practice is a collaboration between the school and the Salvation Army.

Grade Level(s): Middle School

Principle(s) Implemented: 5, 9

Topic(s): Mentoring, Service to Community/Service Learning, Staff Development/Student Leadership

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: Ellis Middle School, Austin

Main Contact: Jennifer Gosha, Jennifer.gosha@austin.k12.mn.us

► **Empowering Future Leaders**

Students organize and lead activities that help fight hunger and poverty in their community.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 9

Topic(s): Service to Community/Service Learning

Year Honored: 2012

Honoree: Footprints Academy, Woodbury

Main Contact: Darlah Krug, dkrug@footprintsacademy.com

► **Family Life Groups**

Instructional school-wide intent to foster a caring culture, by encouraging respectful relationships through microcosm, student-led groups that emphasize vibrant and inclusive relationships.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 9

Topic(s): Leadership Groups, Mentoring, Orientations/Welcoming

Year Honored: 2015

Honoree: Concordia Academy, Roseville

Main Contact: Tim Berner, tim.berner@concordiaacademy.com

► **Overnight Leadership Conference**

The Overnight Leadership Conference engages grades 7-12 students in a variety of student-led leadership workshops, peer-mentoring activities, and teamwork exercises to promote a positive and supportive community of learners.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 9

Topic(s): Mentoring, Relationship Building, Student Autonomy/Empowerment

Year Honored: 2015

Honoree: AFSA High School, Vadnais Heights

Main Contact: Liz Burkwald, lburkwald@afsahighschool.com

► **Project Sidekick**

A student created and led in-house mentoring program with meaningful matches between high school and middle school students, leading after-school activities for the pairs. The Northfield Public Schools, Connected Kids Program, provided support for project.

Grade Level(s): Middle School, High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 9

Topic(s): Bullying/Peer Cruelty Prevention, Mentoring
Year Honored: 2014
Honoree: Arcadia Charter School, Northfield
Main Contact: Lisa Malecha, lmalecha@arcadiacharterschool.org

► **Student Leadership**

A representative group of students creates a vision and plan for character education.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 9

Topic(s): Staff Development/Student Leadership

Year Honored: 2008

Honoree: Orono Middle School, Long Lake

Main Contact: Kristine Flesher, kflesher@rono.k12.mn.us

► **Student Leadership Advisory Program**

Students in the program organize activities that build our online school community and encourage students' civic and social participation in their home communities. Students share leadership, make a positive contribution to the school, and support one another to make positive contributions in their home communities.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 9

Topic(s): Leadership Groups, Service to School/School Beautification, Staff Development/Student Leadership

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: Minnesota Online High School, St. Paul

Main Contact: Darcie McGee, d.mcgee@mail.mnohs.org

Principle 10: Engages families and community as partners in the character initiative.

► **Celebrating Diversity: A Minnesota Twins Partnership**

Lakes International Language Academy, a K-6 language immersion school, partners with the Minnesota Twins to celebrate diversity, inspire international-mindedness and build cross-cultural communities.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 1, 4, 10

Topic(s): Social Issues/Diversity/Tolerance

Year Honored: 2012

Honoree: Lakes International Language Academy, Forest Lake

Main Contact: Julie Lundgren, jlundgren@lakesinternational.org

► **Emergency Plan Packets**

Service learning course students researched the topic of deportation and developed a project that wouldn't be intrusive yet would be a legitimate help to families who are under the stress of deportation. They created emergency plan packets that list helpful local and state resources and how to access them, fill-in-the-blank style information that could help the family in case of emergency, and concise cards stating their rights under the constitution.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 10

Topic(s): Assessment & Action, Relationship Building, Service to Community/Service Learning

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: Northfield High School, Northfield

Main Contact: Sarah Swan McDonald, sarah.swanmcdonald@nfld.k12.mn.us

► **Farm and Community Service Day**

Twice a year students and staff at the Academy for Science and Agriculture (AFSA) High School travel to community farms, parks, camps and businesses to assist with manual labor projects.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 5, 10

Topic(s): Community Members, Relationship Building, Service to Community/Service Learning

Year Honored: 2014

Honoree: AFSA High School, Vadnais Heights

Main Contact: Alexis Katzer or Marlee Mollet, akatzer@afsahighschool.com or mmollet@afsahighschool.com

► Freedom Week

Each year students are immersed in learning about the freedoms and rights of Americans. Freedom Week kicks off with an assembly by the local VFW and Legion. Through guest speakers, decorating the entire building and social studies lessons, students are engrossed in the concept that “freedom isn’t free.” Students learn about the sacrifices that have been made in order to have those freedoms and what happens when you lose them.

Grade Level(s): Middle School

Principle(s) Implemented: 3, 10

Topic(s): Core Values: Teaching, Learning or Visual Display; Social Issues/Diversity/Tolerance

Honoree: IJ Holton Intermediate School, Austin

Main Contact: David Brown, David.brown@austin.k12.mn.us

► How Can We Impact Another Generation?

A service-learning project built intergenerational relationships between students and seniors. Students, after reflecting on how they can make an impact on the older generation, interviewed seniors, identified needs and created a plan to celebrate the lives of the seniors they met through books, plays and video productions.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 10

Topic(s): Community Members, Service to Community/Service Learning, Student Autonomy/Empowerment

Year Honored: 2015

Honoree: Orchard Lake Elementary School, Impact Academy, Lakeville

Main Contact: Marilyn Smith, Marilyn.smith@asd194.org

► Kids Helping Kids

This project highlights the importance of giving to and/or serving others. The entire school made and donated items to a local children’s hospital each year. Students and the community are both greatly impacted.

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 2, 4, 10

Topic(s): Service to Community/Service Learning

Year Honored: 2009

Honoree: Schumann Elementary, Orono

Main Contact: Dr. Connie Fladeland, cfladeland@orono.k12.mn.us

► Life Story Project

At a community-wide celebration, students, parents, staff and community members each made a fingerprint leaf on a pre-painted tree to symbolize the importance of individuals putting their “fingerprints” on the school and contributing to the school community’s continued growth.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 10

Topic(s): Academics, Relationship Building, Service to Community/Service Learning

Year Honored: 2017

Honoree: Fosston High School, Fosston

Main Contact: Patti Johnson, pjohnson@fosston.k12.mn.us

► LILA’s Thumb-Tree Painting

At a community-wide celebration, students, parents, staff and community members each made a fingerprint leaf on a pre-painted tree to symbolize the importance of individuals putting their “fingerprints” on the school and contributing to the school community’s continued growth.

Grade Level(s): Mixed

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 10

Topic(s): Parents & Grandparents, Relationship Building, Visual Display of Core Values

Year Honored: 2015

Honoree: Lakes International Language Academy, Forest Lake

Main Contact: Tracy Maurer, tmaurer@mylila.org

► Sibley East School Garden

A collaboration of students, staff and community partnerships created a Farm-to-School vegetable garden.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 10

Topic(s): Engaging/Interactive Curriculum

Year Honored: 2011

Honoree: Sibley East High School, Arlington

Main Contact: Jim Amsden, jamsden@sibley-east.k12.mn.us

► **Soup Supper Night**

The first grade classes hold a unique celebration called 'We All Eat Soup' in which families bring soups and breads and share an evening meal as a celebration of what they have learned in their unit entitled 'We are all the same/we are all different.'

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Principle(s) Implemented: 4, 10

Topic(s): Engaging/Interactive Curriculum, Social Issues/Diversity/Tolerance

Year Honored: 2010

Honoree: Lakes International Language Academy, Forest Lake

Main Contact: Nancy Hawkinson, nhawkinson@lakesinternational.org

► **Warrior Seminar**

Warrior Seminar is a course to support freshman students in the transition to high school, provide opportunities for career and college exploration, and build social skills. Ideas from the Warrior PRIDE framework (Preparation, Respect, Integrity, Determination, Excellence) are interwoven with lessons and activities from a character development curriculum that helps students better understand habits that shape their behavior. Teachers, community mentors, guest speakers, and upper-class students provide guidance and knowledge for freshman to evaluate themselves and find their drive in high school and beyond.

Grade Level(s): High School

Principle(s) Implemented: 3, 10

Topic(s): Community Members, Workshops/Classes/Discussion Group

Honoree: Henry Sibley High School, Mendota Heights

Main Contact: Mr. Benjamin Geiger, Benjamin.geiger@isd197.org

► **Young Citizens of the Month**

Those that receive this prestigious monthly award feel pride and respect. At the end of the year, the most deserving of the monthly winners are Year Honored as Young Citizens of the Year. Ellis brings a community connection to its character awards through a unique partnership with a local business owner. Students may redeem an award certificate at the business and their name is announced over the business loud speaker as a citizen of the month. The businessperson also hosts a luncheon for winners where character in the workplace is discussed. What a truly unique way to show the importance of character!

Grade Level(s): Middle School

Principle(s) Implemented: 10

Topic(s): Social Recognition/Sportsmanship

Year Honored: 2009

Honoree: Ellis Middle School, Austin

Main Contact: Cathy Cooper, ccooper@austin.k12.mn.us

PRINCIPLE 11: Assesses its implementation of character education, its culture and climate, and the character growth of students on a regular basis.

No Minnesota Promising Practices currently awarded for Principle 11