



Virtues and Character Recognition Award

Recognizing Middle Schools and High Schools in 2023

Applications due no later than January 27, 2023

APPLICATION

Name of School:	
School District:	
Address:	
Telephone:	
Contact Person:	
Email:	
School Enrollment:	
Middle School or High School:	
Grade Levels:	

Instructions: *Complete Verification of School Faculty Meeting Form on page 3 and respond to each of the criteria on page 4.* Responses should provide a clear understanding of what character development and civic education mean in the context of your school and how your school addresses these areas. **The application is limited to 5-pages. The Verification of School Faculty Meeting Form is excluded from 5-page limit**

What Schools Can Apply

AWARDED SCHOOLS RECEIVE RECOGNITION ONCE EVERY FOUR YEARS. If your school received the Bonner Center’s Virtues and Character Recognition Award in 2021, your next opportunity to receive this award will be 2025, during the Middle and High School award sequence. Unfortunately, for this reason, APPLICATIONS FOR THIS AWARD CANNOT BE ACCEPTED FROM SCHOOLS THAT RECEIVED THE BONNER CENTER’S AWARD IN 2021.

Application Submission

Deadline to receive applications is January 27, 2023.

Email one PDF copy of your completed application and any supplemental information to Dr. Mabel Franks at mafranks@mail.fresnostate.edu.

In the email **subject header**, type “**Bonner Application 2023 Submission- [School Name]**”

If the application is received, you should receive a notice within 24-48 hours. **If you do not receive read receipt contact Mabel Franks at 559-259-2251 ASAP**

Awarded School Expectations: Awarded schools will be requested to:

- Attend the April 25, 2023 recognition ceremony at the Clovis Veterans Memorial Bldg
- Provide a short Students-Teacher presentation during the ceremony, highlighting award-winning school practices with poster and/or video
- A special guest speaker with also be included that appeals to our student audience.

Questions? If you have any questions regarding the application or submission process, please contact: Dr. Mabel Franks (559) 259-2251 or mafranks@mail.fresnostate.edu

Virtues and Character Recognition Award: 2023

Middle Schools and High Schools

The word character is derived from the Greek “to mark” or “to engrave”. People with good character display good behavior and such habits are embedded, or marked, on a person. The **U.S. Department of Education** notes the following about character education: “Character education is an inclusive term embracing all aspects of how schools, related social institutions and parents can support the positive character development of children and adults.... For a school to foster character development, it must provide a positive social environment, characterized by leadership; collegiality; a learning orientation among faculty; and ties among school, home and community (*Mobilizing for Evidence-Based Character Education*, USDE, 2007).

Likewise, our education system has a central role in equitably cultivating the qualities that will enable all students to mature well and to participate in American democracy. As Thomas Jefferson stated, “*The qualifications for self-government are not innate. They are the result of habit and long training.*” Civic learning is vital for our increasingly diverse California society. Research has demonstrated that six core activities directly improve the quality and effectiveness of civic learning in democratic schools. These practices are: classroom instruction in government, history, law and economics; service learning projects tied to the curriculum; simulations of democratic processes; extracurricular activities that have a strong civic dimension; student participation in school governance; and discussions of current events and controversial topics (*Revitalizing K-12 Civic Learning in California: A Blueprint for Action*, 2014).

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

As well, the portrait of students meeting its criteria for “the literate individual” painted by the *Common Core State Standards* includes three capacities that are especially pertinent for character development and civic education. Students meeting that goal: 1) ...*comprehend as well as critique*; 2) ... *value evidence*; and 3) ... *come to understand other perspectives and cultures* (*English Language Arts Standards: Introduction, CCSS Initiative*).

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

WE ENCOURAGE YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Verification of School Faculty Meeting to Discuss Character and Civic Education (Include with award application)

School Name:

District:

Faculty Meeting Date:

Verified by:

Directions: The three criteria below and their quality indicators define the elements that should be present in an exemplary school promoting character and civic education. They are the criteria your school will address in its narrative application (see page 2 for definitions and orientations).

Discuss each of these questions with your faculty prior to writing and submitting your application for the Character and Civic Education Recognition Award. Check the items under each criterion that were discussed with your faculty, **note the highlights of all pertinent discussion** (see #4, Summary Statement, under the Application Criteria), and **submit this page after the cover page as part of your application.**

Verifier, initial each item discussed with your faculty to show faculty inclusion in development of the application

Criteria	Initial
CRITERION 1: This school promotes core ethical values as the basis of good behavior.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education for democracy is at the core of the purposes for our public schools. • Describe why American public schools should involve themselves with developing the character of their students. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you describe what are the character and civic education goals for your school? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has your school made progress in achieving these intended goals? 	
CRITERION 2: This school fosters an intentional, proactive and comprehensive approach to its core values in all phases of school life.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you describe how character and civic education are infused throughout your school's curriculum? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your school ensure a clean, secure and psychologically healthy learning environment? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you describe how adults at your school promote and model fairness, equity, caring and respect? 	
CRITERION 3: This school provides students with opportunities for civic learning and service learning projects tied to the curriculum.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do students at your school contribute in meaningful ways to the school, to others and to the community? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does your school promote social competencies and behaviors by students? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you provide examples of service-learning activities at your school connected to the curriculum? 	

Virtues and Character Recognition Award: 2023
Application Criteria for Middle Schools and High Schools

NOTE: The criteria below and their quality indicators define the elements that should be present in a school with an exemplary character and civic education program. Page 2 provides the Bonner Center’s foundation for the criteria in this application. Scoring will be based on how well the school addresses each area. Evaluators will read the application holistically but this application should **address each question in order, by criterion**. In addition to the cover sheet, there is a *five-page narrative limit* (not including page 3). The cover sheet must be completed and attached as the top sheet of the application. Page 3, Verification of School Faculty Meeting, should be next.

Schools can reapply for the Bonner Center recognition every two years. However, Middle schools and High schools that received the Bonner Center’s Virtues and Character Recognition Award in 2021 can only apply every four year. If your school received recognition in 2021, you are not eligible to apply for this year’s award.

EMAIL ONE PDF COMPLETED APPLICATION by January 27, 2023 to the address on the cover sheet. **INCLUDE YOUR SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION IN THE PDF SUBMISSION)**

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

- a. Education for democracy is at the core of the purposes for our public schools. Why should American public schools involve themselves with developing the character education and civic learning of their students?
- b. Describe the character and civic education goals for your school? How (or why) were those goals determined?
- c. Describe your school’s progress in working towards your goals— have you made progress? By what process do you measure (or monitor) progress towards achieving your character and civic education goals?

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

- a. Describe how character and civic education is addressed at your school throughout the curriculum and at all grade levels. Are they infused throughout the core curriculum? Are they addressed in other parts of the curriculum? Provide examples.
- b. Describe how you ensure a psychologically safe and caring school environment (virtual, hybrid, and/or in-person) for students at your school.
- c. Describe how the adults at your school (teachers and classified staff) promote and model fairness, equity, caring, and respect for others.

3. CRITERION: This school provides students opportunities for civic action.

- a. Describe how your school makes it a priority for students to contribute in meaningful ways to the school, to others and to the community. Do your students volunteer, do they engage in service learning at their school? In their community? Are there service-learning opportunities tied to the curriculum? Please give a rationale for such student involvement and examples of how this aspect is implemented. Does your school provide structured opportunities for students to reflect critically on their service experiences?

4. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Provide a summary of your school’s work in creating a healthy character and civic learning climate. Include in your Summary Statement highlights of your school’s discussion about its program as checked off on the Verification of School Faculty Meeting form.