A Report to the Nation

Smart & Good High Schools

Developing Excellence and Ethics for Success in School, Work, and Beyond

Promising Practices for Building 8 Strengths of Character That Help Youth Lead Productive, Ethical, and Fulfilling Lives

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Cultural indicators from every sector of American life—political and military, business and education, sports and entertainment, families and communities—demonstrate the need to develop citizens of all ages who lead ethical and purposeful lives and contribute to a productive, just, and caring society.

There has been a growing response—evidenced by public discourse about character, employers’ emphasis on character in the workplace, attention to character in educational research and social science, and a resurgence of character education in our schools and communities—to meet this need for character.

To date, high schools have not responded adequately to these character challenges by placing character development at the center of their mission.

In general, high schools have not embraced character development as central to their mission because character has not been defined to include both excellence and ethics—performance character and moral character.
Smart & Good High Schools educate for character—both performance character and moral character.

Smart & Good High Schools believe that both performance character and moral character—excellence and ethics—are essential for leading a productive, ethical, and fulfilling life.

Smart & Good High Schools utilize all things in the life of the school—curriculum, discipline, co-curricular activities, rituals and traditions—as opportunities to develop performance character and moral character.

Smart and Good High Schools create an ethical learning community where faculty and staff, students, parents, and the wider-community support and challenge each other in their quest for excellence and ethics.

Smart and Good High Schools create a professional ethical learning community where faculty, staff, and administrators are committed to continuous self-development and ongoing improvement of the practices used to develop performance character and moral character.

Ethical Learning Community (ELC)

Developing Collective Responsibility for Excellence and Ethics

In an ethical learning community, faculty and staff, students, parents and the wider community support and challenge each other to do their best work (performance character) and be their best ethical self (moral character).
The *Smart & Good High Schools* report organizes promising practices around eight developmental outcomes, or “strengths of character,” which define performance character and moral character.

### 8 Strengths of Character for Success in School, Work, and Beyond

1. Lifelong learner and critical thinker
2. Diligent and capable performer
3. Socially and emotionally skilled person
4. Principled ethical thinker
5. Respectful and responsible moral agent
6. Self-disciplined person who pursues a healthy lifestyle
7. Contributing community member and democratic citizen
8. Spiritual person engaged in crafting a life of noble purpose

**Excellence and Ethics… for Human Flourishing Over a Lifetime**

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