

# 2008 State Schools of Character<sup>®</sup> Awards



## STATE SCHOOLS OF CHARACTER

Call 1- 414-963-1423 for further information.

These application guidelines can be downloaded from the Wisconsin Character Education Partnership website at

[www.wicharakter.org](http://www.wicharakter.org)

Wisconsin Character Education Partnership

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# Wisconsin Schools of Character<sup>®</sup> Awards 2008 Application Guidelines



Sponsored by the Character Education Partnership and Wisconsin Character Education Partnership

## Purpose of the Wisconsin Schools of Character Awards Program

Every year, the Character Education Partnership (CEP) names 10 public and private schools and districts (K-12) as National Schools of Character (NSOC) for their outstanding work in character education. The purpose of the awards program is to honor these exemplars, showcase their work, and help them to inspire and lead others.

Through a grant from the John Templeton Foundation, CEP has expanded its program to include State Schools of Character (SSOC). Many states, including Wisconsin, are now conducting SSOC competitions as a preliminary step to advancing to the NSOC awards. The purpose of this tiered approach is to allow more schools and districts to be recognized and to provide exemplary sites within states to serve as models for other educators.

## Structure of the SNSOC Program

Modeled after the NSOC awards program sponsored by CEP, the Wisconsin Character Education Partnership has announced the creation of the Wisconsin Schools of Character awards program (WSOC). The WSOC program will recognize schools or districts that excel in exemplifying CEP's *Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education*<sup>™</sup> and demonstrate an outstanding character education initiative that yields positive results in student behavior, school climate, and academic performance. The WSOC winner(s) may be eligible to advance to the national level competition becoming a national finalist. The number of Wisconsin schools or districts selected to advance to the national competition will depend on the total number of WSOC applications in relationship to the total number of applications received nationwide in 2008.

## State and National Schools of Character Recognition

The school(s) or district(s) named 2008 Wisconsin Schools or Districts of Character will be honored by Wisconsin Charac-

ter Education Partnership at the Annual Character Education Conference. State winners also receive the right to use CEP's SSOC awards logo.

The 10 National Schools or Districts of Character receive recognition at the annual CEP National Forum on Character Education in November in the Washington, DC area and through national and local press coverage. CEP features the NSOC in its annual publication and on the CEP website. In addition, award recipients receive a National School (or District) of Character banner for display and the right to use the NSOC awards logo.

## \$20,000 NSOC Award

Thanks to a generous grant from the John Templeton Foundation, 2008 NSOC award recipients will receive a \$20,000 grant: \$10,000 to enhance their program and \$10,000 to provide outreach to other educators. Once selected as a National School or District of Character, winners will develop an approved plan for conducting outreach activities, to include providing staff development or mentoring for another school or district.

## Benefits for All Applicants

The process of completing the application provides a rich opportunity to conduct a thorough self-assessment. The following comments are from past applicants:

- "Getting specific feedback gave us direction. We took the feedback seriously and that made all the difference."
- "This process allowed us to really focus on integrating character into everything we do—and keep a portfolio to tell our story."
- "It unified the staff as they gathered all the material needed for the application."

All applicants receive detailed feedback in the form of a *Quality Standards* score sheet and written comments. Applicants also receive a subscription to *E-ssential Character*, CEP's electronic newsletter. Many applicants are also nominated to receive a Promising Practices award for a specific activity or strategy described in their application.

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CHARACTER  
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Leading a National Call to Character

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Milwaukee, WI 53217  
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# Wisconsin Schools of Character Awards

## Eligibility

To be eligible, a school must have been engaged in character education for a minimum of three full years, starting no later than December 2004 for the 2008 awards. Districts need to have been engaged in character education for a minimum of four full years, starting no later than December 2003. Schools must have a minimum of 175 students to apply. Smaller administrative units that maintain a separate identity within a large district may apply in the district category, e.g., a school pyramid or cluster. Previous National Schools of Character are ineligible to apply.

## Application Process

Check our website [www.wicharacter.org](http://www.wicharacter.org) for assistance or for information regarding any workshops that might be offered.

The SSOC and NSOC applications are the same. A completed application consists of the following:

- An **Application Cover Sheet** printed after information about your school or district is entered on CEP's website and signed by the principal (or superintendent);
- A separate page that describes the **Demographics** of your students and faculty and other **Application Information**;
- A 7-page **Narrative** that explains how your school or district's character education program exemplifies the *Eleven Principles*;
- A 25-page **Portfolio** that provides supporting evidence for the Narrative;
- A **Self-Assessment Score Sheet** that shows the results of your school or district's self-assessment using the *Quality Standards*.

**Four copies** of the completed application, assembled in the order given above, must be mailed by **December 3, 2007**, to Wisconsin Character Education Partnership. More detailed information about each piece of the application follows.

## Timeline

In December and January, Wisconsin Character Education Partnership's Schools of Character Advisory Committee will review state applications using the *Character Education Quality Standards* scoring criteria. In evaluating school district applications, evaluators also use the document *Guidelines for School Districts in Fostering Character Education*. Wisconsin Character Education Partnership announces state selections in February 2008. One or more winning Wisconsin applications then move on to the national competition. In March and April, two-person evaluation teams visit the national finalists. In May, a blue-ribbon panel of professionals in the field of character education selects the 10 National Schools or Districts of Character. In June, Wisconsin Character Education Partnership honors the state winners.

## Documents Needed

Download copies of the *Character Education Quality Standards*, the *Eleven Principles*, and *Guidelines for School Districts* from [www.character.org/nsoc](http://www.character.org/nsoc) or call CEP at (1-800) 988-8081, ext. 10 or (1-202) 296-7743, ext. 10 to request copies.

## Application Cover Sheet

Begin the application process by going to the CEP website to create your **Application Cover Sheet**. Doing so will also give Wisconsin Character Education Partnership and CEP valuable information that will enable us to keep track of your application and communicate with you. When you begin your application online, you will be asked to enter information such as:

- Basic information about your school (or district).
- The month and year your school (or district) began implementing its character education initiative.
- Information about how you heard about this award.

## Demographics and Application Information

On a separate sheet of paper, please provide the following:

- Student and faculty demographics. Include ethnicity, special needs populations, and other pertinent information.
- AYP Status: If you have not met AYP, please explain.
- An explanation of who participated in completing the *Quality Standards* self-assessment.
- An explanation of who contributed to completing the application, and the names and titles of those individuals who wrote the application narrative.

## Narrative

The body of your application should be a 7-page narrative that explains how your school's (or district's) character education "story" exemplifies the *Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education*. Follow these formatting guidelines in your document:

- Use 1-inch margins, 12-point type, Times New Roman font.
- Double space and use only one side of the paper.
- Number the pages 1 – 7.

Your Narrative should clearly answer the following two questions:

### 1 What are your character education goals?

**On page 1 of the Narrative**, define your school's (or district's) view of character education and the values your school community has agreed upon. Describe your philosophical approach, and explain what your character education initiative is trying to accomplish. Explain *why* you are doing what you are doing.

### 2 How are you implementing character education?

**On pages 2 – 7 of the Narrative**, give evidence of your accomplishments in each of the *Eleven Principles*. Use the *Character Education Quality Standards* as a guide. Note that each of the Principles has three or four "scoring items." While you will receive a score for each item based on the supporting evidence you provide, it is best not to write a separate paragraph for each item. Rather, write a separate paragraph (or more) for each Principle and include specific, illustrative examples that address the scoring items. Keep in mind that the "exemplary prac-

tices” bulleted under each scoring item are meant to serve as examples of effective implementation, rather than a required list.

Clearly number each section with the number of the Principle you are describing. To use your limited space effectively, only mention information once even if it applies to more than one Principle. Cross reference your Portfolio when possible.

The Narrative is your opportunity to make a persuasive case that your school (or district) has thoughtfully implemented character education and that your initiative has had positive and significant results. Be sure to provide and explain specific *qualitative* and *quantitative* evidence to support your argument. Provide full data and analysis from climate surveys and other measurements. Use numbers, not percentages, when reporting changes in student behavior. When describing activities, explain how frequently they occur and how many students they involve. Your Narrative (and Portfolio) should clearly demonstrate that your community has gathered data, reflected upon it, and then acted as needed. If your school or district has previously applied for the NSOC/SSOC award, be sure to include the changes that you have made since the last application somewhere in your narrative.

Finally, if you are using a commercial program as part of your initiative, be sure to include a brief explanation of the program.

## Portfolio

Submit a Portfolio that amplifies and supports your Narrative. The Portfolio should contain evidence of the effectiveness of your program but should not be an alternative to answering any of the narrative questions. Use the following guidelines when assembling your Portfolio:

- Include a Table of Contents and number the pages 1 – 25.
- Put evidence in order of the *11 Principles*.
- Use one side only of 8 1/2 x 11 inch paper.
- If you wish, include several pieces of evidence on each page by reducing the size of original items. Do not reduce items so much readers will have difficulty seeing them.
- Be mindful of how well your pages will reproduce and how clearly readers will be able to see your evidence after it has been copied.
- Date newspaper articles and other date-sensitive items.
- Do not bind the Portfolio or send it in an album, cover, or binder. (Because the entire application may need to be copied, each copy should simply be clipped together.)
- If including original documents, keep in mind that Portfolios will not be returned.
- Do not include videos, CDs, t-shirts, or posters.

The following are examples of items to include in the Portfolio:

- Data on positive behavioral or academic change.
- Copies of surveys on school climate and survey results.
- Mission statements and school mottos.
- Examples of student work or testimonials.
- Calendars and other evidence of character-building events.
- Articles from school newsletters or local newspapers.

## Self-Assessment Score Sheet

Assemble a group of knowledgeable stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, parents, and students (if appropriate) to assess your character education initiative using the *Character Education Quality Standards* assessment instrument. Send in a compilation (average) of your scores on one score sheet as the last page in your application.

An Excel score sheet is available for your use on the NSOC page of the CEP website ([www.character.org/nsoc](http://www.character.org/nsoc)). You can use it to enter and compute your scores in Excel. You can then print your compiled score sheet and submit it with your application. Or, if you prefer, you can simply copy, use, and submit the score sheet page in the *Quality Standards*.

### Application Checklist:

Assemble all **36 pages** of your completed application in order and make four copies. Clip each copy together and do not bind or cover it. Send **four collated copies** of the following to Wisconsin Character Education Partnership:

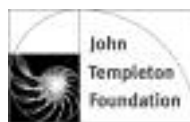
- Signed **Application Cover Sheet**
- Demographics and Application Information** page
- 7-page **Narrative**
- Portfolio **Table of Contents**
- 25-page **Portfolio**
- Self-Assessment Score Sheet**

### Send to:

Wisconsin Character Education Partnership  
PMB 104  
P.O. Box 17900  
Milwaukee, WI 53217

### Deadline:

**Applications must be postmarked by Monday, December 3, 2007.** Applicants will be notified in writing upon receipt of their applications.



The NSOC awards program is supported by grants from the John Templeton Foundation and the UAW-GM Center for Human Resources.

# DUE ... December 3, 2007 (postmarked)