

CHARACTER SAVES LIVES



CharacterPlus®

# GOODNESS

MEMBER  
DISTRICTS'  
ACT  
SCORES

MEMBER  
DISTRICTS'  
STATE  
PROFICIENCY  
SCORES

NATIONAL  
SCHOOLS OF  
CHARACTER  
PERCENT TO  
NATIONAL  
TOTAL

# GREATNESS

+ 8%

+ 5%

+ 15%



CharacterPlus®

*performance*

*page 2*

# THE RIGHT

CHARACTERPLUS WAY

TEACHER ACADEMY IN  
CHARACTER EDUCATION (TACE)

AUTONOMY, BELONGING, &  
COMPETENCE

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RACISM AWARENESS &  
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# DIRECTION

*school climate, culture, and academic excellence*

*equipping your future teacher leaders*

*incorporate character best practices for students*

*positive approaches to classroom discipline*

*create a solid character education foundation*

*build a supportive community of learners*

*navigating dilemmas youth face in daily life*

*an expert opinion for your building*

*a path to whole-school improvement*

*character trait resources at the ready*

*equipping you to confidently lead the process*

*empowering students to be change agents*

*character-based athletes, coaches, and spectators*



**CharacterPlus®**

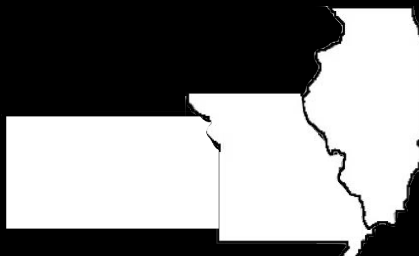
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# DO RIGHT



## CharacterPlus® Way

## PRIMED



# DONE RIGHT

*Our character education evidence-based process is part of CASEL's Promising Practices recognition for positive social, emotional, and school climate growth.*

*The nation's leading **evidence-based** character education process proven to increase school-wide academic performance, lower classroom referrals, and improve culture and climate.*

*PRIMED is a **United States Department of Education** recommended framework for Character Education in Schools, developed by Marvin Berkowitz, Ph.D. McDonnell Professor of Character Education at UMSL, UM System Thomas Jefferson Fellow and Co-Founder of The Center for Character & Citizenship.*

*Our region historically **leads the nation** in numbers of schools recognized as State and National Schools of Character. On staff is the nation's leading SSOC consultant on numbers of active schools awarded this honor.*

*CharacterPlus provides the region's **longest running anti-racism** and institutional bias discovery program for high school students – Gateway2Change.*

*Our workshops, assessments, school culture transformations, interactive programs, and membership will include over **50 districts, multiple universities, 16,000 educators** and more than **300,000 students**. Our international work includes the countries of Brazil, China, Taiwan, and Zambia.*



**CharacterPlus®**  
our credentials

# HIGH QUALITY

Dr. Denise Funston, Principal  
Windsor Elementary School

Frank McMurray, Principal  
Belton Middle School

Dr. Ce Andre Perry, Principal  
Academy of Entrepreneurship  
Studies Middle (AESM – SLPS)

Dr. Karen Calcaterra, Principal  
Lafayette High School

Vince Bingham, Head Coach  
Maryville University

Dr. Lorinda Krey, Principal  
Fairway Elementary School

# HUMANS

*"...social emotional learning, restorative practices  
...the BEAUTIFUL THING about character  
education is that it incorporates all of that..."*

*"Nicole was amazing in her support, suggestions, and  
sharing her personal experiences with SSOC. She was  
great at affirming the good work our students, staff,  
and parents have been putting in over the last few  
years. Nicole is a great listener and an enthusiastic  
guide on the side!"*

*"The AESM family is grateful to have the support of  
the CharacterPlus Way program in the building. The  
program has progressively transformed our school  
culture from year one until present. Students now  
report that they enjoy coming to school, and we have  
fewer altercations among students. Staff relationships  
have improved, and we have noticed an increase in the  
sense of ownership and belonging of our students..."*

*"...the narrative must be shifted: character  
education isn't just more on your plate as a leader,  
IT IS the plate..."*

*"...CharacterPlus has made a tremendous impact  
on our team's culture and performance in short  
order. This season our athletes' performance and  
connectedness has been like no other as a result..."*

*"The State Schools of Character Readiness  
Assessment was one of the best assessments we have  
ever done, and it has provoked great conversations  
about what we can continue to improve upon! It's  
definitely impacting and guiding our goals for the  
future, too!"*



**CharacterPlus®**  
character voices

# DON'T WORRY

Kristen Pelster, Ed.S.

Nicole Diehl

Emilie Johnson, Ph.D.

Amy Johnston, Ed.D.

Tami Bopp, M.Ed.

Debbie Brandt, M.S.

Claudia McMillin, M.B.A.

Heather Nadenbush

Marvin Berkowitz, Ph.D.

Melinda Bier, Ph.D.

Christopher Funk, Ph.D.

Mike Park

# BE BETTER

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Character Education in Emerging Leaders (CEEL) Consultant,  
African Vision of Hope Vision Team Member -  
kpelster@characterplus.org*

*CharacterPlus® SSOC Director leading the nation in the number  
of schools coached that have become State and National Schools of  
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*CharacterPlus® Consultant, Instructor, Professor of Teacher  
Education at Lindenwood University, with an emphasis on  
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*CharacterPlus® Finance Manager & Friends of  
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Education, UM Thomas Jefferson Fellow, Professor UMSL, Co-  
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*Scholar Advisor, Co-Director of the Center for Character and  
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info@characterplus.org*

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*CharacterPlus® Executive Director, LACE Academy, The U.S.  
Army Intelligence Center & School, The Wharton School  
Management Program, University of Alabama, Center for  
Character & Citizenship Affiliate Scholar, Business Executive &  
Co-Founder WeBeSchools - mike@characterplus.org*



**CharacterPlus®**  
the team

# PROGRAM DETAILS



# CHARACTER GOES THE DISTANCE

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## INTENTION

*To improve overall school culture and climate, as well as increase academic achievement and decrease disciplinary incidents, regardless of a school's geographic, socio-economic, or demographic profile.*

## OVERVIEW

*This CASEL-endorsed, evidence-based process's power and sustainability rests in its framework, which emphasizes core values and implementation unique to the school community. By using data for ongoing assessment, monitoring, and refinement, a comprehensive and sustainable process is created.*

## OUTCOME

*Schools that complete the CharacterPlus® Way process show higher test scores and academic performance while decreasing disciplinary incidents. School culture and climate improves, relationships are strengthened, and belonging takes a front seat. Additionally, many schools are ready to go through the Schools of Character recognition process after implementation.*

## START

*Contact CharacterPlus® expert Nicole Diehl at [ndiehl@characterplus.org](mailto:ndiehl@characterplus.org) to begin the conversation on the goals you are seeking to accomplish for your educators, students, and school culture and climate.*



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## INTENTION

*To provide expert training and resources in character education to educators in years 3-5 of their career, and inspire and equip them as teacher-leaders with best practices and methods for social, emotional, and character development for students.*

## OVERVIEW

*A year-long cohort led by experts in the field of SEL & Character Development. It will include the following topics: Understanding Self & Others; The ABC's (Autonomy, Belonging Competence) of Character; History & Frameworks; Class Meetings & Structures; Self-Care & Mindfulness; Positive Relationships; Classroom Management; Trauma, Diversity, Equity & Bias Awareness; Curriculum Integration; Building Effective Communication with Parents & Coworkers; & Student Empowerment.*

## OUTCOME

*The outcome of this academy is to equip teachers to live their noble purpose by understanding the importance of character education, while also lowering teacher turnover and increasing job satisfaction.*

## START

*Our inaugural middle school cohort will begin September 2020. Contact Kristen Pelster at [kpelster@characterplus.org](mailto:kpelster@characterplus.org).*



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## INTENTION

*Autonomy (voice and choice), belonging (being part of a community), and competence (the ability to do something successfully) are needs all humans have. These are especially true for students, and as educators, we need to create opportunities for students to experience these three things.*

## OVERVIEW

*Learn activities and strategies to implement immediately at your school. Explore ideas to challenge and stretch your students to grow their sense of competence. Leave with a plan to ensure you are being intentional about creating a school community in which all students have a voice, belong, and feel like they matter.*

## OUTCOME

*When students feel empowered and that they have a voice, it provides leadership opportunities, creates a positive school community, and can ultimately transform your school environment.*

## START

*This workshop is offered twice a year (or can be done at your school as whole-staff professional development). You can register on our website, or contact our Program Director Kristen Pelster at [kpelster@characterplus.org](mailto:kpelster@characterplus.org) for more information.*



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## INTENTION

*Educators frequently struggle with how to effectively improve the behavior of students, especially concerning undesirable behaviors.*

## OVERVIEW

*This workshop will focus on understanding the purposes of discipline and behavior management, how both prevention and remediation need to be part of such systems, and specific strategies for effective developmental discipline.*

## OUTCOME

*Developmental discipline starts with the perspective that the goal of disciplinary encounters is the long-term positive development of the student, both so the undesirable behavior is reduced and so the student develops character. In other words the behavior changes, but so does the student, so s/he becomes less likely to engage in such behavior (and related behaviors) in the long run.*

## START

*This workshop is offered once a year. You can register on our website, or contact Kristen Pelster at [kpelster@characterplus.org](mailto:kpelster@characterplus.org) for more information.*



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## INTENTION

*This workshop will provide the instruction needed to create a solid foundation around the basic tenets of character education. If you are ready to transform your school or classroom into a true community of learners, move your school or classroom from good to great, and increase student achievement while decreasing discipline incidents, this is for you.*

## OVERVIEW

*This two-day workshop is led by four experts in the field of character education and includes: history and theory of character education, framework for effective character education, building a learning community based on autonomy, belonging and competence, and best practices in effective character education.*

## OUTCOME

*Participants will receive CharacterPlus Foundational Certification upon completion of this workshop, indicating their foundational understanding of Character Education and the ability to return to the classroom ready to implement best practices.*

## START

*This workshop is offered three times a year. You can register on our website, or contact Kristen Pelster at [kpelster@characterplus.org](mailto:kpelster@characterplus.org) for more information.*



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## INTENTION

*Class meetings are more than just students sitting on the floor for instruction and a means for problem-solving. Effective class meetings help strengthen a student's skill set around problem solving, social interest, mutual respect, encouragement, and cooperation. True class meetings encompass specific components that build classroom community and a sense of autonomy, belonging, and competence for students.*

## OVERVIEW

*Learn the what, why, and how of running an effective class meeting and ensure that students become involved in the process. Participants will experience a class meeting firsthand and have an opportunity to participate in the circle. Leave with a step-by-step plan on how to implement class meetings in your classroom or school and open new doors for student voice, leadership, and safety.*

## OUTCOME

*When students are encouraged to share their thoughts, are given choices, and use group problem-solving skills, the classroom atmosphere improves and becomes one of cooperation, collaboration, and mutual respect.*

## START

*This workshop is offered three times a year (or can be done at your school as whole-staff professional development). You can register on our website, or contact our Program Director Kristen Pelster at [kpelster@characterplus.org](mailto:kpelster@characterplus.org) with questions.*



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## INTENTION

*Focusing on middle school students, WeBeSchools ignites curiosity and a personal understanding of the positive possibilities wise choices create. It does this by leveraging timely, authentic, and age-relevant dilemmas middle school students face in everyday life. The program creatively places students at the apex of a decision, where they must grapple with their character.*

## OVERVIEW

*WeBeSchools is the first online middle school program specifically designed to build social, emotional, and character muscle in adolescents. Animated dilemmas, created by a team of scholars, teachers, interactive designers, animators, and writers, center on how today's youth communicate and learn. Visit [kindness.webeschools.com](http://kindness.webeschools.com) to see an example.*

## OUTCOME

*A 2019 study conducted by Character Lab (co-founded by Angela Duckworth, author of Grit and University of Pennsylvania MacArthur genius grant recipient) reflected a 10% increase in a student's inclination to make more favorable decisions when faced with difficult dilemmas. Students using WeBe's program reported they would be more likely to self-advocate, advocate for others, and question bad choices. This program is available to member middle schools to use in their schools immediately.*

## START

*Contact Kristen Pelster at [kpelster@characterplus.org](mailto:kpelster@characterplus.org) for more information.*



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## INTENTION

*We are often asked by schools how they know if they are ready to apply for Schools of Character recognition. We created a new tool in 2019, based on our years of experience helping schools transform their culture and climate, called the School of Character Readiness Assessment.*

## OVERVIEW

*Two consultants from our programming team will spend 2-3 hours at your school during a typical school day. They will tour the building and meet with the administration and/or culture/climate team to learn about the level of character education implementation in the school.*

## OUTCOME

*This process will create a list of implementation possibilities aligned with the requirements of the School of Character framework, as well as a recommendation regarding the school's timing for applying to Schools of Character.*

## START

*Contact Kristen Pelster at [kpelster@characterplus.org](mailto:kpelster@characterplus.org) to schedule your assessment or for more information.*



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## INTENTION

*This workshop will focus on classroom-level character education prioritization, relationship building among students and teachers, using intrinsic motivation to help youth internalize ethical and performance values, the impact of modeling ethical and performance behavior, empowerment opportunities for youth leadership and voice, and practicing identified skills as hallmarks of effective ongoing character development.*

## OVERVIEW

*The U.S. Department of Education said, "When considering character education, states might use a framework researchers have summarized using the acronym PRIMED: Prioritization, Relationships, Intrinsic Motivation, Modeling, Empowerment, and Developmental Pedagogy." PRIMED is the work of Dr. Marvin Berkowitz. Participants will get a deep dive understanding of the process, and immediate ways to begin laying this foundation in their school, classroom, and personal life.*

## OUTCOME

*The U.S. Department of Education reports that classrooms that use this framework will often experience higher student engagement, which leads to stronger academic performance. Practiced well, this approach will see classrooms reduce disciplinary incidents. And as classroom culture and climate improves, relationships strengthen, and student belonging takes a front seat to feeling isolated or disconnected.*

## START

*This workshop is being developed for 2020 – 2021 contact our Program Director Kristen Pelster at [kpelster@characterplus.org](mailto:kpelster@characterplus.org) for more information.*



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## INTENTION

*Created as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Character Series aims to bring practical resources to teachers and families around one character trait per week.*

## OVERVIEW

*Every Thursday, the CharacterPlus programming staff will post a new list of resources for students of all ages, currently being educated at home, to illustrate what the trait of the week looks like in action. Additionally, many highly respected Character Educators are partnering with us to offer encouragement each week via a welcome video.*

## OUTCOME

*Our hope is these resources will provide parents and teachers with a well-rounded, whole-child approach as the nation adjusts to students being educated in the home for the foreseeable future. Character education goes way beyond the classroom! We hope people will share their experiences online, encouraging others to participate.*

## START

*Simply go to the Character Series section of our website to see the archived resources.*



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## INTENTION

*The Schools of Character application process begins with a rigorous self-evaluation and creation of a large portfolio demonstrating a school's character education implementation. This process can seem overwhelming, and because we think it is so valuable, we want to support schools through the application process.*

## OVERVIEW

*Two half-day workshops are offered in the fall every year to help equip schools with the knowledge they need to confidently apply for Schools of Character. The first, generally offered in September, is an overview of the application process, including best practices in creating a portfolio. The second workshop, generally in early November, is a mentoring opportunity for schools. Potential applicants bring their application, and experienced leaders from National Schools of Character read through their drafts and offer feedback.*

## OUTCOME

*School teams feel empowered to confidently lead their school through the Schools of Character process.*

## START

*Register for the workshops on our website, or contact Nicole Diehl at [ndiehl@characterplus.org](mailto:ndiehl@characterplus.org) for more information.*



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## INTENTION

*CharacterPlus' framework rooted in social-emotional learning and character development, coupled with work focusing on intergroup relations, combine to create a network of students and educators committed to more equitable school communities. This student experience creates racial equity change agents who work to transform those around them, their schools, and a future otherwise constrained by present realities.*

## OVERVIEW

*GATEWAY2CHANGE (G2C) is the only high school program in the region that engages racially and economically diverse students in intentional peer-to-peer conversations around race, equity, and institutional bias. Conversations on race, oppression, and privilege occur in a way that creates a gracious space for expression. We help each find empathy for people who have a different lived experience from their own. Critical yet compassionate conversations occur around systemic and institutional racism.*

## OUTCOME

*G2C participants become aware of their own bias and the problems we face socially and culturally. They come to understand the social, financial, educational, and emotional elements responsible, and what daily life is like for those on either side. More so, students become comfortable talking to people who don't look like them about differences, and they grow to possess the confidence to help others come to these understandings for themselves. Most importantly, they have a desire to champion change.*

## START

*Contact Kristen Pelster at [kpelster@characterplus.org](mailto:kpelster@characterplus.org) for more information.*



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APPLICATION SUPPORT

RACISM AWARENESS &  
INSTITUTIONAL BIAS

● cSPORTS

## INTENTION

*We are taking our culture and climate successes with our evidence-based character education process, and we are applying what works in schools to high school and college athletics. This new focus is not only for coaches and athletes, but also for spectators at your school's fields, courts, and tracks.*

## OVERVIEW

*Our research reflects that over 85% of high school athletic directors would entertain a character-based approach instead of the traditional behavior-based approach. Our new approach includes deliberate teaching of the team's core values to student-athletes, the coaching staff, and spectators, as well as taking a character-based approach to academic performance, respect in all relationships, and competitive fairness. Our workshop will provide the road map for integrating these new processes into current policies.*

## OUTCOME

*CharacterPlus® has seen performance and culture transformation success with collegiate-level athletics. We've accomplished this by leveraging the decades-long character education foundational expertise honed with helping administrators and teachers. Teachers seek academic success, and coaches seek athletic success. But neither are maximized when social, emotional, and character strength isn't also a focus. Yet the go-to policy and practice for most teachers and coaches (and athletic policy) is behavior-focused versus character. There is a better path.*

## START

*This program is slated for Spring 2021. Contact Kristen Pelster at [kpelster@characterplus.org](mailto:kpelster@characterplus.org) for more information.*



**CharacterPlus®**

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*thank you...*