

Hello again and greetings from USD 467!

Welcome back to a new semester at USD 467! We hope you had a great holiday break and the students are ready to get back to learning! This week I will pick back up with the Kansans Can plan from the Kansas State Board of Education.

Social Emotional Character Development is teaching, practicing, modeling and encouraging essential personal life habits that are universally understood as making people good human beings and citizens. It is learning with our heads, hearts and hands to be caring and civil, to make healthy decisions, to effectively problem solve, to be respectful and responsible, to be good citizens and to be empathetic and ethical individuals. In schools SECD takes many forms, including programs that specifically address safe and drug-free schools, service learning, emotional literacy, bullying and violence prevention, the embracing of diversity and other similar initiatives.

The 11 Principles of Character Education: The school community promotes core ethical and performance values as the foundation of good character; The school defines “character” comprehensively to include thinking, feeling, and doing; The school uses a comprehensive, intentional, and proactive approach to character development; The school creates a caring community; The school provides students with opportunities for moral action; The school offers a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character, and helps them to succeed; The school fosters students’ self-motivation; The school staff is an ethical learning community that share responsibility for character education and adheres to the same core values that guide the students; The school fosters shared leadership and long-range support of the character education initiative; The school engages families and community members as partners in the character-building effort; and, The school regularly assesses its culture and climate, the functioning of its staff as character educators, and the extent to which its students manifest good character.

Civic Engagement: Individuals sharing their skills and knowledge through actions intended to improve communities, states, nations, the world, and themselves.

Background

In 2015, the Kansas State Department of Education hosted over 280 focus groups in twenty communities across the state, asking “What are the characteristics, qualities, abilities and skills of a successful 24-year old Kansans? Kansas community and business leader focus groups identified “citizenship, ethics, and duty to others” as critical interpersonal social skills required for student success. In response the Kansas State Board of Education created the following definition.

A successful Kansas high school graduate has the academic preparation, cognitive preparation, technical skills, employability skills and civic engagement to be successful in postsecondary education, in the attainment of an industry recognized certification or in the workforce, without the need for remediation.

Civic engagement is comprised of actions and attitudes associated with social participation. The most obvious are voting, volunteering, and donating money, but civic engagement may also involve membership in civic and community organizations, public speaking, petitioning, mentoring, assisting a neighbor, or other informal volunteering activities that lead to stronger communities.

Next week I will continue with the subject of Civic Engagement, which happens to be one of the Board of Education district goals.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. If you have specific questions or want more information about what's happening in the buildings or district, don't hesitate to contact Lori Maxwell, WCES Principal, at 375-2314, Delbert Schmidt, WCJSHS Principal, at 375-2213, or me at 375-4677. Thanks!

Keith Higgins