



Contact:
Lucy Frontera
Lucy.frontera@charactereducationohio.org
(614) 893-9971

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2011 OHIO SCHOOLS OF CHARACTER NAMED NATIONAL SCHOOLS OF CHARACTER FINALISTS

Columbus, OH — Theodore Roosevelt High School in Kent and the Hamilton City School District, named as the 2011 Ohio School/District of Character by Ohio Partners in Character Education (OPCE), have been selected as finalists by the Character Education Partnership (CEP) in Washington DC for the National School of Character designation. Being named an Ohio School of Character is a preliminary step to the national award. The Ohio Schools of Character Awards is a “future workforce” program of the Better Business Bureau’s new Center for Character Ethics and is sponsored by the Ohio Association of BBB’s, Ohio Partners in Character Education and the Ohio Department of Education.

Applying to be a State or National School of Character (SSOC/NSOC) is a rigorous process and requires that schools spend at least three years developing a comprehensive character education program, and make significant progress in achieving each of the Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education, the “yardstick” by which applications are evaluated. This prestigious national award represents an exceptional accomplishment by schools in providing a school atmosphere committed to the highest standards of ethics and excellence. Schools of Character promote respectful relationships among staff, students and parents, and provide safe, academically challenging and supportive learning environments.

Nationwide there were 140 applications for SSOC/NSOC. All applications were evaluated by national experts, and 50 of them were selected as finalists. The finalists will be asked to provide further data and information or will receive a site visit by another set of judges. Finally, in May some of these schools will be named “National Schools of Character”. For the first time, CEP will not limit the number of NSOC to 10, but will award the title of NSOC to all finalists that score high enough on the Eleven Principles assessment.

Hamilton City’s program focuses on compassion, personal responsibility, honesty, respect and acceptance. The development of these traits is woven into classroom, school and community activities. Students take an active role in the program, setting weekly classroom learning goals, participating in service projects and developing leadership skills in a variety of school and extracurricular activities. A committed staff works hard to integrate these principles into the classroom while presenting a challenging and varied academic curriculum.

Roosevelt High School’s program is centered on the “RIDERS” acronym - **R**espect, **I**ntegrity, **D**etermination, **E**xcellence, **R**esponsibility, and **S**ervice. All staff receives training – from board of education administrators to custodians, and there is a strong emphasis on developing caring relationships among staff and students. They have instituted special programs for at-risk students and created a service-based program that blends multiple academic subjects with applied learning experiences and service projects. All students take a course that includes self-reflection and ethics.

“Roosevelt and Hamilton City have achieved this honor because of their dedication and persistence. They are willing to look at their school reflectively, assess themselves critically, identify goals, and work hard to improve their program. This is what they expect of their students, and they are modeling that as a staff and as a school,” said OPCE Director Lucy Frontera. “We are proud of their well-deserved success.” Both schools, as well as the other Ohio School of Character applicants, will be honored at the Ohio Schools of Character Summit to be held October 12, 2011 in Columbus. For more information about the Ohio program visit www.charactereducationohio.org; learn more about the national program at www.character.org.