Character Strong Implementation

September 2025 Board Update

Building Positive School Culture Through Social-Emotional Learning and Trauma-Informed Practices

What is Character Strong?

"Character Strong: A comprehensive social-emotional learning curriculum that builds positive school culture through trauma-informed, research-based character development"

Three Core Components:

🟢 **Daily Character Lessons**

- Morning meetings with character focus
- Age-appropriate SEL skill building
- Consistent school-wide language and expectations

🟡 **Trauma-Informed Practices**

- Understanding student behavior through trauma lens
- Building safety and connection first
- Healing-centered approach to discipline

🔴 **Positive Culture Systems**

- School-wide character recognition
- Community building activities
- Staff and student leadership development

"Our Goal: Create a safe, supportive environment where all students can learn and grow, especially those who have experienced trauma or adversity."
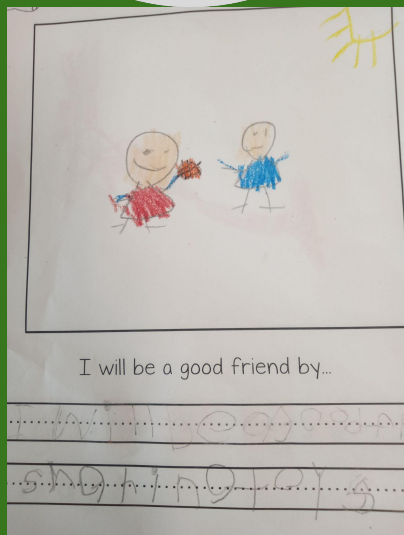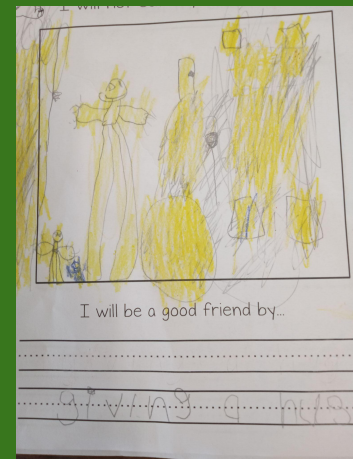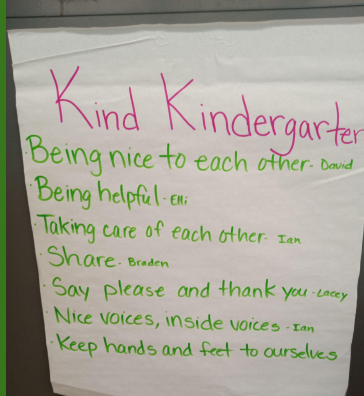
Current Student Climate Data

Youth Needs & Strengths / Strength and Needs Assessment Results - Baseline for Character Strong Impact

	Youth Needs Screener Results:	Strengths & Needs Screener Results:
Internalizing Risk • Students experiencing frequent anxiety, sadness, or emotional difficulties • May manifest as withdrawal, mood changes, or academic struggles • Requires support for coping skill development	12%	11%
Strengths Deficit • Students lacking social competence and executive functioning skills • May struggle with relationships, problem-solving, or self-regulation • Needs skills-building interventions and adult mentoring	25%	15%
Dual Risk	5%	3%
Low Risk Concerns	63%	74%

Growth - Resilience - Intensity - Tenacity

Nurturing Resilience, Inspiring Excellence

"These data points help us identify which students need additional character development support and trauma-informed interventions.

Mrs. Tracey's Classroom Evidence - Character Strong Daily Implementation

1. **Student Character Growth Examples**

Kind Kindergarten
Being nice to each other - David
Being helpful - Eli
Taking care of each other - Ian
Share - Braden
Say please and thank you - Lacey
Nice voices, inside voices - Ian
Keep hands and feet to ourselves

I will be a good friend by...

2. **Student Voice/Feedback**
   ○ "It helps us know how to be learners."
3. **Classroom Culture Strategies**
   ○ Morning Message; Learning Read (eyes watching, ears listening, brains focused, hearts caring); Character Traits Focus linked to PBIS

"How do Character Strong practices create a positive, trauma-informed classroom environment that supports all learners?"

Growth - Resilience - Intensity - Tenacity
Nurturing Resilience, Inspiring Excellence

I will be a good friend by...

Mrs. Cole's Classroom Evidence -

"How do Character Strong practices help students with trauma or behavioral challenges develop positive character traits and coping skills?"

1. **Character Development Examples**
   ○ Specific lessons presented such as preventing/stopping bullying and peer to peer feedback.

2. **Student Voice/Feedback**
   ○ Learning Self Advocacy: Student voice led to a bell schedule change this academic year.

3. **Trauma-Informed Response Data**
   ○ Proper expression of frustration.

Implementation Effectiveness - Building Positive Culture

Data Comparison Areas:

Office Discipline Referrals:

- 2023-24 Baseline: 105 Office Discipline Referrals (August through September)
- Current (Sept 2025): 77 Office Discipline Referrals
- Target: Reduce by 20% through Character Strong positive culture approach

Social-Emotional Skills Trends:

- Students Demonstrating SEL Skills: 74%
- Students Needing Character Support: 26%
- Goal: 80% of students thriving in positive character culture

Monthly Character Focus & Goal

Monthly Character Strong Implementation Process:

- **Character Theme Focus:** Monthly school-wide character trait emphasis
- **Student Recognition:** Celebrating character growth and positive choices
- **Staff Development:** Ongoing Social-Emotional Learning, trauma-informed practice training
- **Family Engagement:** Home-school character development partnership

Our Goal: 80% of students thriving in positive character culture, as measured by:

- Reduction in office discipline referrals due to positive behavior choices
- Youth Needs Screener and Strengths and Needs Screener scores showing strong social-emotional development

Research Foundation - Character Development & Trauma-Informed Practices

Character Strong Research Base - Three Key Areas:

1. **Academic Outcomes**
   ○ Students in strong character programs show 10-15% improvement in academic achievement due to better emotional regulation and engagement

2. **Behavioral Improvements**
   ○ Schools with comprehensive character education see 30-50% reduction in disciplinary issues and improved school climate

3. **Trauma-Informed Benefits**
   ○ Trauma-informed SEL approaches help students develop resilience, improving attendance, engagement, and long-term success

"Research shows that when students feel safe, connected, and valued through character development, they're better able to learn, grow, and overcome challenges including trauma impacts."

Next Steps & Commitment

Our Promise to Students: "Every student will experience a safe, caring school environment that builds character, addresses trauma with compassion, and celebrates growth."

Three Commitments:

- **Monthly Character Focus:** Continue implementing school-wide character themes with consistent recognition

- **Trauma-Informed Training:** Ongoing professional development in trauma-sensitive practices, PBIS, and Behavior support & Development

- **Culture Goal Achievement:** Working toward 80% of students thriving in positive character culture

"Questions about our Character Strong implementation and trauma-informed culture building?"