



## TWENTY THREE SCHOOLS AND TWO DISTRICTS ARE NAMED 2017 NEW JERSEY SCHOOLS/DISTRICTS OF CHARACTER



The New Jersey Association for Social, Emotional, and Character Development (NJASECD) is proud to announce that 23 schools and 2 districts have been named 2017 New Jersey Schools of Character. These schools have been forwarded to Character.org (formerly the Character Education Partnership), a national character education advocate and are in the national evaluation process for consideration to be named 2017 National Schools /Districts of Character.

Character.org recognized 80 schools and 6 districts from 27 states as 2017 State Schools and Districts of Character. Since Character.org's Schools of Character program's inception, more than 550 schools have been designated as a State School of Character, impacting more than a million students. This year New Jersey has the highest number of State Schools of Character in the nation.

The 2017 New Jersey Schools of Character are: A. Russell Knight Elementary School, Cherry Hill; Alexander Denbo Elementary School, Pemberton; Bret Harte Elementary School, Cherry Hill; Broad Street School, Bridgeton; Burlington County Alternative School, Mount Laurel; Campbell Elementary School, Metuchen; Cinnaminson Middle School, Cinnaminson; Essex County North 13th Street Tech High School, Newark; Frank J. Smith School, East Hanover; Harrison Elementary School, Roselle; Helen A. Fort/ Marcus Newcomb Middle School, Pemberton; Howard L. Emmons Elementary School, Pemberton; Jonas Salk Middle School, Old Bridge; Mahala F. Atchison School, Tinton Falls; Merriam Avenue School, Newton; Morgan Elementary School, Hamilton; New Brunswick Middle School, New Brunswick; Paradise Knoll School, Oak Ridge; Somerset Intermediate School, North Plainfield; Tinton Falls Middle School, Tinton Falls; Toms River High School East, Toms River; Whitehouse Elementary School, Whitehouse Station; and Yardville School Hamilton. The two 2017 New Jersey Districts of Character are: Cherry Hill Public Schools and New Providence School District.

The following 17 schools and 2 districts are recognized as 2017 New Jersey Honorable Mention Schools of Character: Apshawa School, West Milford; Bell Oaks Upper Elementary School; Bellmawr; Canfield Avenue School, Mine Hill; Fort Dix Elementary, Pemberton; Green-Fields Elementary; West Deptford; Harker-Wylie Elementary School; Pemberton; Jerome Dunn Academy of Mathematics, Technology, and the Arts, School No. 9, Elizabeth; Joseph D. Sharp Elementary School; Cherry Hill; Joseph Stackhouse Elementary School; Pemberton; Joyce Kilmer Elementary School, Cherry Hill; Montville Township Public Schools, Montville; Pinelands Regional Junior High School Little Egg Harbor; Riverview Elementary; Denville; Samuel T. Busansky Elementary School, Pemberton; Swimming River School; Tinton Falls; Terence C. Reilly, School No. 7, Elizabeth; Unity Charter School, Morristown; Vineland Public Schools, Vineland; and West Milford Township High School; West Milford.

The New Jersey Emerging Schools of Character are: Aletta Crichton Elementary School, Pemberton; Dr. Albert Einstein Academy, School No. 29, Elizabeth; John Marshall, School No. 20, Elizabeth; Mary E. Volz Elementary & Middle School, Runnemede.

Character.org is also evaluating the 2017 applications of 4 schools that were named New Jersey Schools of Character during the past two years: They are: Central Elementary School, East Hanover; Maple Road School, West Milford; Upper Greenwood Lake Elementary School, Upper Greenwood Lake; and Washington Elementary School, Roselle. Six schools from New Jersey that were named National School of Character 5 or more years ago have applied to keep their status as a National School of Character. They are: Eldridge Park Elementary School, Lawrenceville; Memorial Middle School, Fair Lawn; Richard Stockton Elementary School, Cherry Hill; Rosa International Middle School; Cherry Hill; and Zane North Elementary School, Collingswood.

Criteria for the designations are based on Character.org's [11 Principles of Effective Character Education](#), which includes providing students with opportunities for moral action, fostering shared leadership and engaging families and communities as partners in character-building efforts. "You can feel the positive climate in these schools the minute you walk through the door. The students, staff and community are respectful and care about each other, and the academics scores improve," states Nina Kemp, New Jersey Schools of Character Coordinator.

The Recognition Ceremony for all of the New Jersey schools will take place during the NJASECD Conference on May 19, 2017 at Rider University. The theme of the conference is, "CHARACTER IS FOREVER: Building Your Program to Last!"

The 2017 National Schools of Character will be announced in mid May at a press conference in Washington, D.C. Character.org will also honor these schools and districts at the 24th National Forum on Character Education, to be held Oct. 20-21, 2017 in Washington, DC.

**About Character Education:** Character education is an educational movement that supports the social, emotional and ethical development of students. It is the proactive effort by schools, districts, communities and states to help students develop important core ethical (recognizing what's right) and performance (doing what's right) values such as caring, honesty, diligence, fairness, fortitude, responsibility, grit, creativity, critical thinking and respect for self and others.