

Tips on Applying for a State/National School of Character Certification

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character.org



What are the Three BIG U's?



☐ **Understand the Application.**

Go to www.character.org. Click on Schools of Character, then Application Information.

☐ **Understand the scoring.**

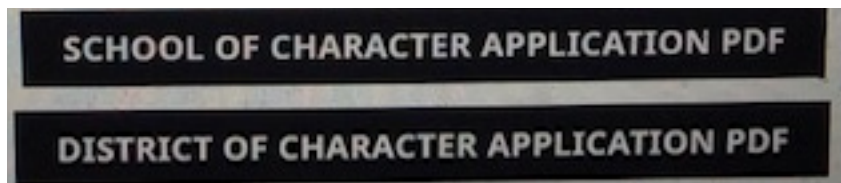
Each Principle narrative is scored from 1 to 4. You need an average of 3.3 (no 2's, please).

☐ **Understand the 11 Principles.**

Our quick review summarizes the main points.

UNDERSTAND THE 2021 APPLICATION

- ☐ Go to www.character.org and click on **Application Information.**
- ☐ Download Application PDF for School or District (Do **NOT** open the Application yet)



School DOWNLOAD

District DOWNLOAD

- ☐ If you are a school or district to be recertified, make certain you download the

RE-CERTIFICATION GUIDELINES

Recertification DOWNLOAD



UNDERSTAND THE APPLICATION



PART

CONTENT

(Red type signifies written narrative)

1

General Contact Information

2

Your Character Journey: Compelling Overview (1500 characters-not scored); Core Values; 3 Resources; Info on Forum.

3

Self-Assessment: This is tricky. You need 6 to 10 folks to score your school/district on the 11 Prin. Follow the directions about sending folks the link as well as scoring guide. District applicants must include assessments from all schools not already certified as National Schools of Character.

Understand the 2021 Application



PART	CONTENT
3	<p>NARRATIVES ON EACH OF THE 11 PRINCIPLES: 2500 characters each. Save as Word documents.</p> <p>EVIDENCE: P. 1 & 3 get 2 each; P. 11 gets 4: ALL others get 1. (NO PHOTOS!)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additional Video or Flyer, ppt, etc. Optional (500 char.)
4	<p>Evidence of Impact: State Tests (LA, Math); Attendance; Suspensions; Survey Questions on School Climate, Bullying, Surveys effecting Change</p>
5	<p>Supporting Evidence: 5 Photos with explanation; Testimonials – teacher, non-teaching staff; student, parent, community member; Promising Practices</p> <p>*Begin filling in the Actual Application only after you have all this material completed. 5</p>

Understand the 2021 Application



The application has 5 parts. You must provide information for each part. However, the narratives for each Principle & accompanying evidence are the basis for your score.

Applying for a NJSOC, National School of Character: Deadline Nov. 20, 2020



- **SAME Application for State & National.**
- **Scoring based on:** *11 Principles of Effective Character Education*
- **Each Unit of the Narrative** for each Principle scored from **1 to 4. 2500 character limit**
- If your total score is **3.3** with no unit average less than 3, you become a NJ School of Character.
- Invited to try for **National School/District of Character accreditation** – additional \$250 fee required for Schools; Districts pay \$500+, depending on the number of schools.

The Scoring Process

**National Schools of Character
Score Sheet**

School/District: _____
Reviewer #: _____

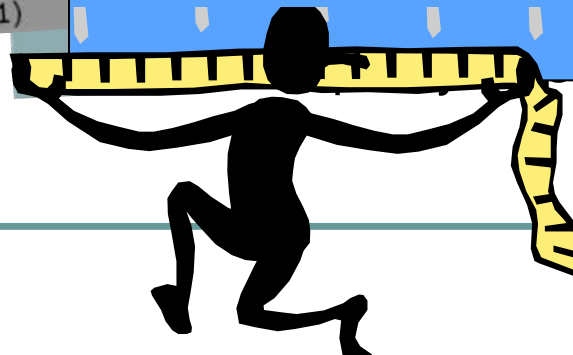
	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3
Principle #1			
Principle #2			
Principle #3			
Principle #4			
Principle #5			
Principle #6			
Principle #7			
Principle #8			
Principle #9			
Principle #10			
Principle #11			
Total (average of each line divided by 11)			

**3.3 for State
School of
Character**

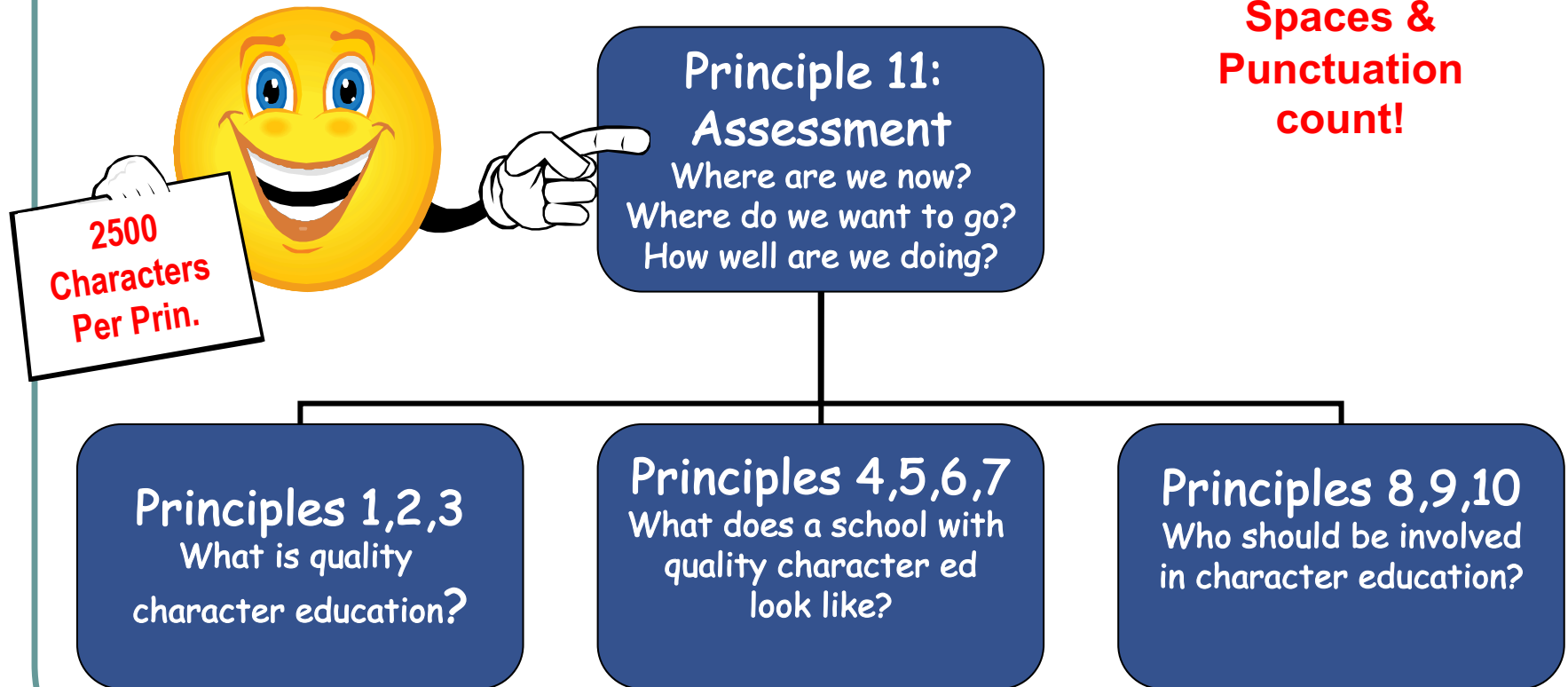
**2.7 for
Honorable
Mention**

NOTE: Items are scored from 1 to 4.
Use the key indicators of exemplary
practice as a guide:

- 1 Lacking evidence**
- 2 Developing implementation**
- 3 Good implementation**
- 4 Exemplary implementation**



Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education: Scoring Rubric





The Scoring Process

www.character.org

DOWNLOAD NOW

the Self-Assessment Tool. Address the bulleted items as you write your narrative.

Many schools have found the Capsule Summary Sheet (referred to as the Self-Assessment Tool in this year's application) an invaluable aid to guide them in framing their narratives.

DOWNLOAD SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL AND SCORING GUIDE

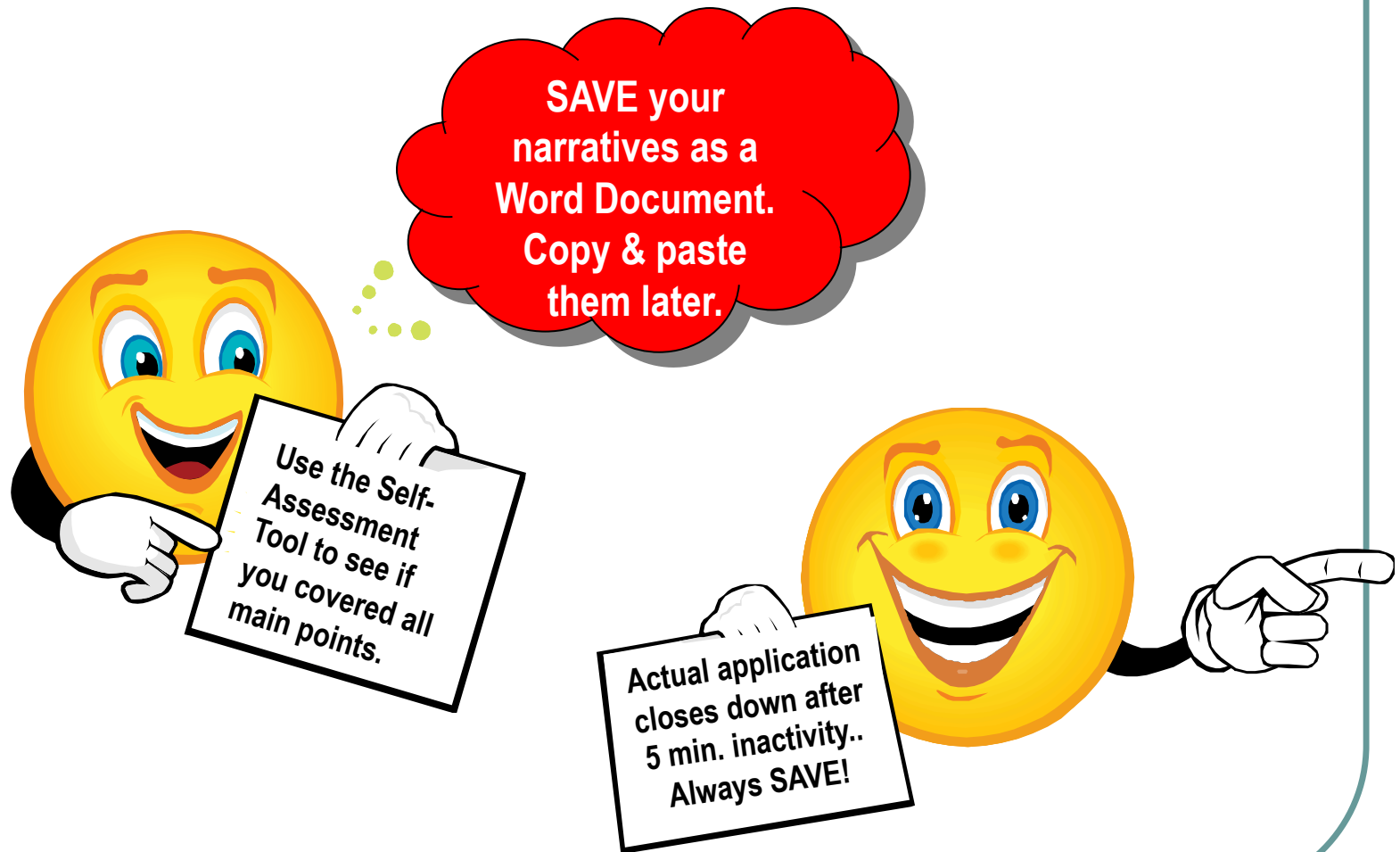


Self-Assessment Tool: Address each indicator (bulleted example) of each scoring item.

	Item #1	Item #2	Item #3	Item #4
1. Core Values are defined, implemented, and embedded into school culture.	Stakeholders in the school community select or agree to core values: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All involved in choice; reflect on relevance if existence for some time Understand why & how values selected A balance of both moral and performance values 	Core Values guide every aspect of school life: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff, students, parents use common language Strong staff buy-in, modeling. Staff ownership for teaching, modeling, integrating core values into everything. Embedded in school policies and procedures Shape hiring practices, new staff training, 	Reminders and statements of core values are visible throughout the school community. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In mission statement, handbooks, discipline code, website, school goals, etc. Defined in behavioral terms; "looks like" Staff, students, parents can identify/explain District: promotes values in vision, mission, goals, objectives, policies, public relations.	
2. The school defines "character" comprehensively to include thinking, feeling, & doing.	Staff teach and provide opportunities for students to understand core values, ethical decision-making, and applications to life situations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff clarify values through instruction Staff can explain how students understand Students can explain/define/demonstrate behavior which models values 	The school provides experiences and time for students to reflect on and internalize the core values. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing empathy and a sense of responsibility for others Reflect thru real-life problems Safety, belonging, autonomy needs met 	The school provides opportunities for students to practice the core values, so they become patterns of behavior. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine self thru journals, discussions Practice and receive feedback ("I-messa goal setting, active listening, role plays) Demonstrate/live core values (coop. group, cross-grade tutoring, class meetings, peer mediation) 	
3. The school uses a comprehensive, intentional, proactive approach to develop character.	The school is intentional and proactive in addressing social, emotional, and character development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research-based standards, core competencies, or key developmental indicators to assure skills are taught. SECD skills are taught at all grade levels District: identified and adopted SECD skills in its instructional program or curriculum/.	Character is integrated into all aspects of teaching and learning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In content of all subjects Opportunities to address ethical issues District: CE included in curriculum frameworks	CE is infused in all aspects of the school day. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All settings (lunch, fields, bus) Artifacts show that values guide TOTAL school life (sports, co-curricular codes) 	
4. The school creates a caring community.	Caring attachments adults/students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students perceive staff as caring Teachers attend school/social events Teachers/students connect in small groups Teachers counsel, mentor Discipline approached in caring and respectful way 	Caring attachments among students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students perceive student body as friendly Educational strategies foster caring/respect (Coop. learning; class meetings; cross-age groups) 	Adults have caring attachments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents welcome Staff feels supported Staff, parents get along Administration collegial District: district-level develops caring with ALL staff	Peer cruelty, tolerance issues, bad language, put downs, bullying, differences are addressed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students report bullying is infrequent Staff, students receive training in dealing with cruelty, bullying, intolerance.
5. The school provides students with opportunities	Clear expectations for service and service learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artifacts to Demonstrate: eg. conflict resolution, academic integrity, good sportsmanship, service, etc. 	Within school—all participate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides in-school opportunities e.g. cross-grade buddies, peer mediation, school care Connects service with the curriculum 	In community—"all" involved & reflect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time provided Connects service with curriculum Students assess community needs, initiate, plan 	

Additional District Requirements in Red!

TIPS before we review each Principle



4 Tips for Narrative Writing



- Make a list of Effective Practices that address the bulleted items BEFORE you start to write. Keep the Self-Assessment handy.
- Buttress each general statement with SPECIFIC EXAMPLES, often giving three or more in one sentence.
- To conserve characters, use abbreviations, “&” for “and”; just one space between sentences.
- Double check your narrative vs. the Self-Assessment Tool to make certain you covered ALL scoring items. Take a character count!

Prin. 1: Core values defined, implemented & embedded into school culture.¹⁴

- Who, how, when were values chosen?
- Are they a mix of moral & performance?
- How are they common language?
- How did they affect hiring & training of new staff?
- How are they publicized?

Stony Brook School, N. Plainfield: All district stakeholders chose C.A.R.D. – Caring, Acceptance, Respect, Determination – as core values & promoted them visually & in multiple ways.



*Core Values Spark
EVERYTHING.*

Prin. 2: Defines character comprehensively¹⁵ to include thinking, feeling & doing

- How is character taught?
- What proof is there the kids get it?
- How do you develop empathy? A sense of belonging? Autonomy?
- What strategies do you use to make it habitual? Cross-grade tutoring?

Dennis B. O'Brien, Rockaway Township, uses cross-grade grouping, "i-messages," role playing, cooperative groups.



Prin. 3: Uses a comprehensive, intentional, proactive approach to develop character.¹⁶

- What research-based competencies do you use?
- How are SECD skills taught at all levels?
- How is character connected to the curriculum in all subjects?
- How is character infused into all settings (lunch, recess, sports, online) during school?



3.1: NJ's 5 SEL competencies (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, social decision-making) are derived from CASEL's research-based framework. Use this in 3.1.

Prin. 4: School creates a caring community

17

- What proof is there that teachers are caring? That discipline is caring too?
- Do students perceive peers as caring?
- What strategies foster caring in kids?
- What proof is there that teachers & parents get along? That staff gets along?
- Proof that bullying is infrequent? What training is there in handling HIB?

Juan Pablo Duarte-Jose Julian Marti - School 28 in Elizabeth, transformed itself by creating a caring culture. Twice recognized as a National School of Character!



Prin. 5: Provides opportunities for moral action (particularly service learning).

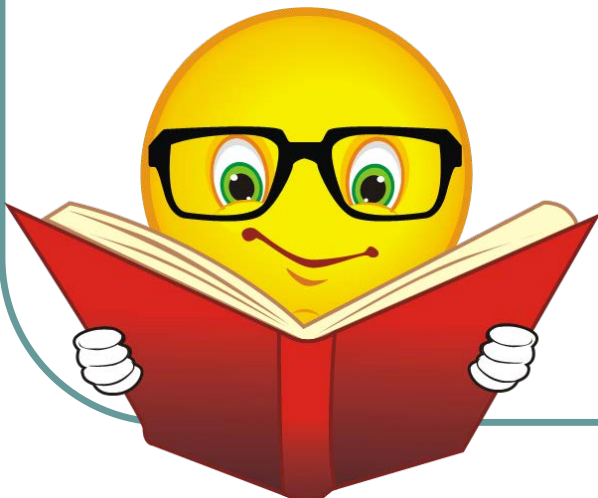
- How are students involved in conflict resolution, good sportsmanship, service?
- Can students differentiate between service & service learning? Is there reflection?
- Provide examples of service learning in school; show ties to the curriculum.
- Provide examples of service learning in community with its curricular ties.



Hanover Park Regional High School has an amazing service-learning program. Check out its character education section: <https://www.hanoverpark.org>

Prin. 6: Meaningful, Challenging Academic Curriculum that Respects All, Develops Char.

- How is your curriculum challenging & how does it promote mastery, voice & choice?
- How do you accommodate diversity? Do parents say teachers know students?
- How do you promote the performance values & academic integrity?



Pauline Petway School in Vineland, twice recognized as a National School of Character, does extraordinary work in raising the aspirations of its diverse student body, many of whom are economically disadvantaged.

Prin. 7: Fosters Students' Self-Motivation.

- Do students understand the difference between intrinsic & extrinsic motivation?
- How has staff stressed intrinsic motivation?
- How do the core values enter into behavior management?
- How does class management reflect core values (students write class rules, etc.)?

Unity Charter School in Morristown, with a mission to educate young citizens to be eco-literate with a strong sense of protecting the environment, has motivated them to initiate many projects on their own.



Prin. 8: Staff shares responsibility for implementing & modeling good character.²¹

- Evidence that teachers act as role models?
- Proof that all staff is involved in planning & implementing character education?
- Is CE training given to ALL staff, including support staff?
- Is sufficient release time given to staff for CE planning & training?



Old Bridge Township Public Schools, whose 15 schools are also National Schools of Character, has excellent CE training for all. New staff are welcomed via interviews, summer trainings, New Teacher Orientation & ongoing frontline training.

Prin. 9: Shared Leadership & Long-Range Support for Continuous Improvement.²²

- How is the principal a champion of CE & what long-range support for it exists?
- How does the CE Committee plan, implement & monitor CE initiative?
- What leadership opportunities exist for all students?

Zane North School in Collingswood, twice recognized as a National School of Character, is a model of shared leadership with the principal, staff, parents, and students working harmoniously.



Prin.10: School engages families, community as partners in character education.²³

- How are parents actively involved in CE?
- In what ways do you communicate with them?
- How do you welcome them (especially newcomers) & recruit them for service?
- What parent workshops do you give?
- How do you involve the larger community?

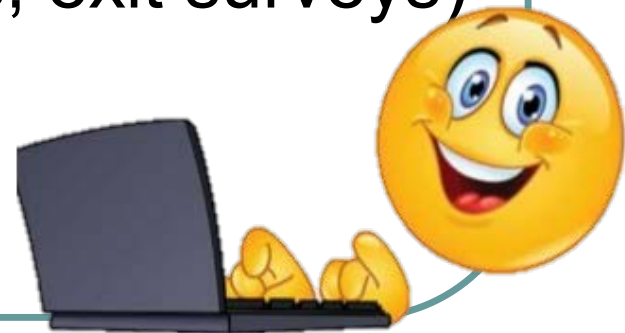


Mantua Township Public Schools partners with its parents & wider community in its “Big Night Out.” The brainchild of the Character Council, it is a three-hour outdoor party, open to the public & offering many activities for families & celebrating character education.

Prin.11:Assesses CE implementation, school culture, climate & student growth²⁴

- Have you reviewed values annually? Made changes? Created a touchstone?
- Used quantitative & qualitative data for improvement & setting goals? Give examples.
- Has staff reflected & reported on character initiative? How?
- Assessed growth through data (surveys, state tests, report cards, behavior stats, exit surveys)

Terence Reilly School 7 in Elizabeth uses multiple data – surveys, focus groups, state assessments, HIB reports, attendance stats, student exit reports - to monitor progress & plan next steps.



Portfolio Evidence



All Portfolio documents submitted in PDF or Word Format. Document (not longer than 3 pages) must be clearly READABLE.

- **Principles 1, 3** get up to **2** documents.
- **Principle 11** gets up to **4** documents.
- **All other Principles** get **1**. **NO** Photos/Collages
- May submit one additional piece of evidence by checking box and submitting (May be a video).

Suggestions: Letters on CE from Principal; flyers; CE agenda; lesson plan; service-learning project; student reflection; SEL competencies; local news article; school climate survey result; attendance; academic growth stats, charts,

LABEL DOCUMENTS ON TOP FOR CLARITY!

Applying for a NJSOC, National School of Character Fees



Mock Audit: \$250: Score Sheet with Strengths, Areas of Growth – no official accreditation.

State School/District of Character Accreditation:

School Application Fee: **\$250**

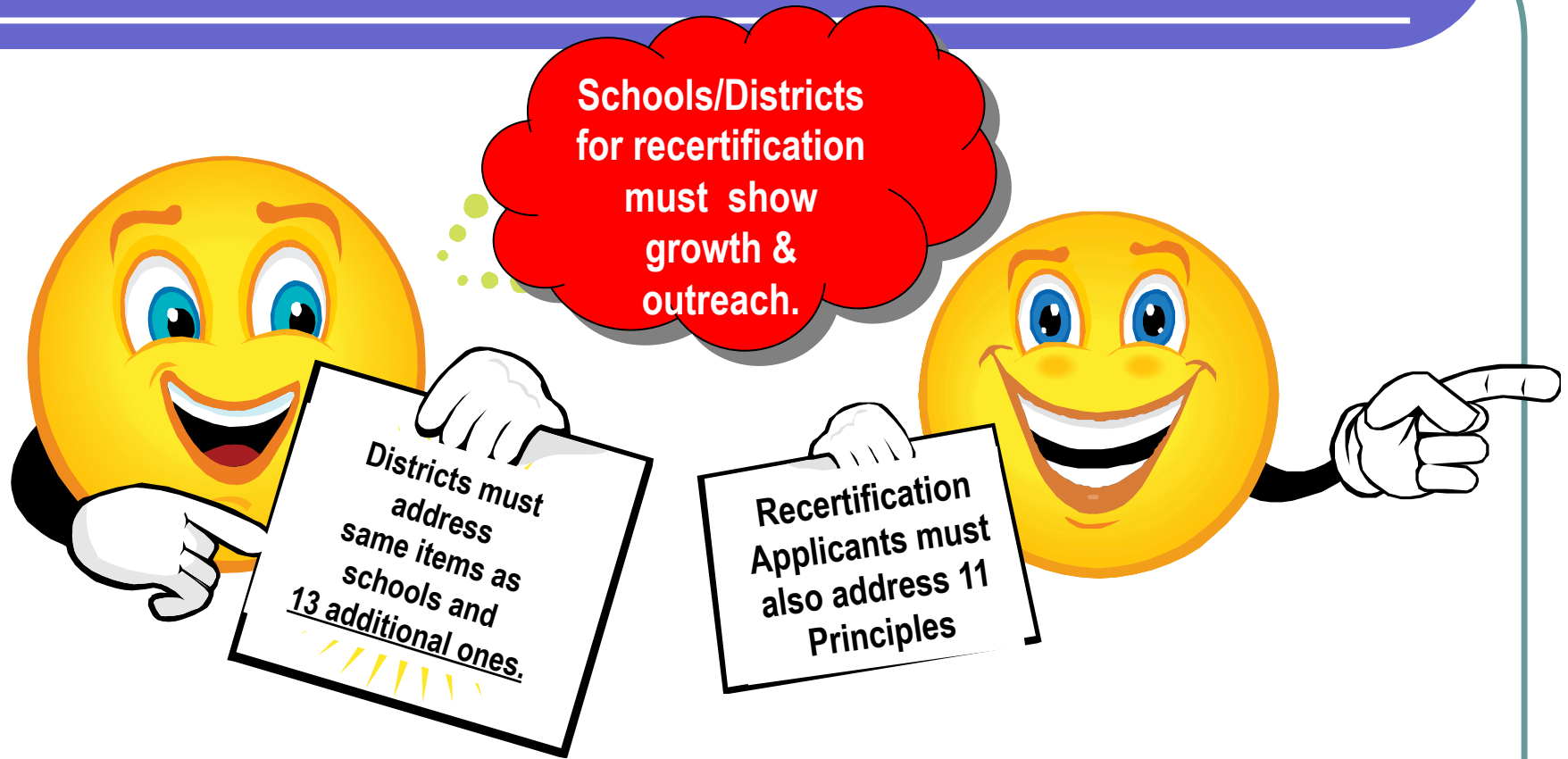
District: \$250+ depending on number of schools.

National School of Character Accreditation

School: Additional \$250 Fee if you have been named a SSOC. National Site Visit with Report

District: Additional \$500+ Fee if you have been named a State District of Character.

STOP: Additional Directions for Districts and Recertifications.



District & Recertification Applicants: Be aware of Additional Requirements

DISTRICTS

- In addition to covering the bulleted items in their narratives, they must address the following 13 items:

1.3	8.2, 8.3
3.1, 3.2	9.1, 9.2
4.3	10.3
5.1	11.2, 11.3
7.1	

RECERTIFICATIONS

In addition to covering the bulleted items in their narratives, they must show how they've grown, done outreach, kept some processes, changed others (and why), the impact of their work through data for 5 years.



Check your work, fill in the Actual Application, & wait for the phone call



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Need more assistance?

NJASECD has Regional Networking Centers across the state that can provide further help as you prepare your application to become a School of Character.

These centers can answer questions, provide information, or even help to set up a mentor relationship for your school. See the contact information for these Regional Centers on the following slides...



Northern Region

Hanover Park Regional HS District

- Chris Kelly, Principal, Whippany Park HS
ckelly@hpreg.org
- Tom Gaglione, Hanover Park HS
tgaglione@hpreg.org



West Milford Township Public Schools

- Marc Citro, Principal, Macopin School
marc.citro@wmtps.org

Central Region

Old Bridge Township Public Schools

- Joe Marinzoli, Principal, Alan B. Shepard ES
jmarinzoli@obps.org



Hamilton Township Public Schools

- Cindy Dacey, Retired Principal,
cndacey@yahoo.com
- Ann Wilmot, awilmot@hamilton.k12.nj.us

Southern Region

Cherry Hill Public Schools

- Mona Noyes, Retired, NJASECD Trustee
mknoyes@comcast.net

Pemberton Township Public Schools

- Jeff Havers, Assistant Superintendent
jhavers@pemb.org



Vineland Public Schools, Pauline Petway ES

- Jennifer Frederico, Principal
jfrederico@vineland.org

NJASECD Contacts

Dr. William Trusheim, President

- william.trusheim@gmail.com

Laurie Coletti, Vice-President and
State SOC Coordinator

- lcoletti@obps.org

Mary Reinhold, Secretary and State SOC Coordinator

- karkev179@gmail.com

Eileen Dachnowicz, Trustee and former State SOC
Coordinator

- edachnowicz@verizon.net



Thanks and Good Luck!



www.njasecd.org