

Character Development Continuum: Kindergarten to Grade 12

About the project ...

The intent of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board *Character Development Continuum* project was to design, build and workshop a K–12 resource for all schools in the district to use as a tool to identify their progress in the journey to embed character development into their classroom and school communities. The intent was to promote conversations among school community members that focus on how they can further embed character development into all that they do and how they can set goals in their School Improvement Plans to make this happen. The project team consulted with individuals and groups from across the district on how character development could be further embedded. From these consultations, the continuum was organized according to the district's three strategic focus areas: learning, leadership and community. In each of these areas, indicators and examples were established on a continuum moving from a starting point of developing and progressing to implementing and extending. The indicators and examples help schools see the connections between different initiatives and consider how they can continue to embed character development into their school community. The continuum promotes a strengths-based approach that builds upon actions that schools are already taking, with the goal of always moving forward. All schools across the district were given the opportunity to examine this tool and to discuss how to include it in their school improvement planning.

Impact on student learning and school culture ...

- All schools within the district now have a tool to examine instructional, leadership and community engagement practice in the context of character development. The tool promotes an approach of moving forward with the development of character in the context of the three areas of focus and supports school communities in engaging in dialogue about these three areas with the goal of better serving the needs of all students.
- The indicators and accompanying examples described in the continuum provide an illustration of some of the different initiatives that could be incorporated within each school. These examples provide school staff and students with opportunities to think critically about character development and how to put it into action.

Lessons learned for moving forward ...

- The decision was made that the continuum should be a dynamic document that each school can reflect on and adapt according to their particular needs.
- The dynamic nature of the document invites discussion about current school practices with the goal of moving conversations forward toward embedding character development in all aspects of the school community.
- This project was an integral component of Board Improvement Planning and the use of the continuum will be an expectation in School Improvement Planning.