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CHARACTER_EDUCATION_NETWORK Online Mail List December 2005 - Vol. #8

Welcome to the **CHARACTER_EDUCATION_NETWORK** online mail list. Your name has been added to this list as a result of your completing the New Jersey Department of Education Character Education Network Online Listserv Form or because you have indicated an interest in receiving updates on character education efforts in New Jersey.

The purpose of **The Network** is to encourage the adoption of character education programs and strategies by providing a forum for sharing information, research and promising practices. Through the New Jersey Center for Character Education (NJCCCE), **The Network** will offer educators access to national and state character education experts and programs through conferences, workshops, and e-mails.

The Network will be bringing you **news** from the national, state and local levels; **best practices**, including updates from our New Jersey Local Education Area (LEA) Partner demonstration sites; announcements of **events, conferences, workshops**; and **professional development opportunities** throughout the state and at the national level; grant and **funding opportunities**; **program and assessment resources** and links to other character education **websites**.

A link to the NJ Center for Character Education website (www.nj-charactered.net) will lead you to current **articles** and **research** from the field as well as materials and large documents which you can download for use in your classroom.

In this issue of The Network:

- From the NJCCCE Director
- Summary of the L.W. v. Toms River Schools Appellate Decision
- 2006 Winter & Spring Dates Announced for Eleven Principles Institute
- January 16, 2006 Deadline Approaches for NJ School of Character Award

FROM THE NJCCCE DIRECTOR

NJCCCE is a member of the New Jersey Coalition for Bullying Awareness and Prevention. The summary below of the Appellate Division decision in the L.W. et al v. Toms River Schools (see [Character Education News](#)) was helpfully distributed by Stuart Green, the coalition convener. (The analysis was disseminated along with the decision, and is credited as: GLBTNJSBA: On Behalf Of John Vespa-Papaleo.)

This is a landmark case regarding the degree to which the NJ Law Against Discrimination is applicable to the public school district context. In this case the main issue was whether a school district can be held responsible for permitting student-on-student harassment, in this instance having to do with

harassment based on perceived sexual orientation. The original decision by the Director of the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights concluded that a school district violated the NJ Law Against Discrimination (LAD) in permitting a bias-based hostile environment to deprive the harassed student of the same educational opportunities afforded to other students.

The Director further concluded that a school district will be liable for such harassment when the school administration or its agents or employees knew or should have known of the bias-based harassment and failed to take measures reasonably calculated, in light of the known circumstances, to stop it. The Toms River Schools appealed the Director's decision to the Appellate Division. One of the aspects of the case that makes it of particular note is that Toms River did many of the things that most districts do and do not do regarding harassment.

Character educators have a lot to contribute when it comes to issues of bias, discrimination and harassment. Establishing core ethical values and making sure they form the basis for conduct and discipline policies as well as interventions with students are critical steps in reducing bias and responding to incidents when they occur.

Philip M. Brown, Ph.D.
Director, New Jersey Center for Character Education

CHARACTER EDUCATION NEWS

- **Appellate Division Decision in L.W. et al v. Toms River Schools**

Highlights of the Court's decision are as follows:

1. The App. Div. found that peer harassment is a cognizable claim under the NJ Law Against Discrimination (LAD).

2. The Court found that the Lehman standard applies and not the "deliberate indifference" standard under Title IX cases.

3. Applying the Lehman standard, the Court held that LW was subjected to unlawful harassment that was both severe and pervasive. (Note: The majority disagreed with the dissent on this issue. Alley, who dissented, argued that the harassment was not pervasive enough to justify a finding of harassment).

4. On issues of liability:

* The Court disagreed with the Director's finding that the district's mechanisms to prevent peer harassment based on sexual orientation were inadequate.

* The Court found that there was sufficient evidence to support the Director's finding that the school failed to take effective corrective action. The Court held that the district's delay in ending the harassment was unreasonable. Also, the Court found that there was sufficient evidence to support the finding that the district did not effectively respond to the 2 incidents that occurred when LW was in high school.

5. On issues of equitable remedies:

* The Court was not convinced that the Director's remedial measures were supported by the record, especially in light of independent, comprehensive requirements under the Department of Education

regulations. The Court reversed and remanded this issue.

* The Court reversed the portion of the Director's order requiring the school district to comply with anti-bullying statutes because the Legislature has conferred authority to enforce the anti-bullying statutes upon the Commissioner of Education.

6. With respect to compensatory damages:

* The Court affirmed the Director's award of \$50,000 in compensatory damages to LW. The Court noted that the award was not excessive and that the Director is not limited to awarding incidental monetary damages.

* The Court rejected the Director's \$10,000 award to LG (LW's Mother) on the ground that she is not an aggrieved person under the LAD.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- **Winter & Spring Dates Announced for Eleven Principles Sourcebook© Trainings**
Six additional regional institutes have been scheduled for winter/spring 2006.

Date: **Wednesday, January 18, 2006**

Time: 8:30am to 3:00pm

Location: Learning Resource Center, North Satellite, Morris Plains, NJ

Date: **Wednesday, February 15, 2006**

Time: 8:30am to 3:00pm

Location: Learning Resource Center, North Satellite, Morris Plains, NJ

Date: **Wednesday, March 1, 2006**

Time: 8:30am to 3:00pm

Location: Kean University, Union, NJ

Date: **Friday, March 3, 2006**

Time: 8:30am to 3:00pm

Location: Cumberland County College, Conference Center, Vineland, NJ

Date: **Monday, April 3, 2006**

Time: 8:30am to 3:00pm

Location: Cook Campus Center, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ

Date: **Thursday, April 6, 2006**

Time: 8:30am to 3:00pm

Location: Busch Campus Center, Rutgers University, Piscataway, NJ

(An additional training will be added at Kean University, tentatively scheduled for February 3, 2006. This date will be confirmed in a special announcement to the NETWORK listserv members.)

Educators may now register online for any of the winter/spring 2006 institutes through the NJDOE Professional Development and Technical Assistance website at: <http://education.state.nj.us/events/>.

1. Click on *Details* for a full description of the Institute, including details, dates, times and registration fees;
2. Click on *Directions* to review and print directions to the specific training location;
3. Click on *Register* to complete and submit your online registration.

NJ Character Education Partnership (NJCEP) state aid funds may be used to cover the cost of registration and to purchase the training manual. NJCCE also offers schools and districts the Eleven Principles Sourcebook training in a seminar format, customized to reflect a school or district's unique needs. Trainings can be scheduled in a one- or two-day format and delivered in-house or at a location determined by the school or district. For more information, contact NJCCE at 732.445.7504.

- **Educating Heart and Mind: The Theory and Practice of Character Education**
Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character (CAEC)
School of Education, Boston University
April 6-7, 2006

This two-day academy will offer plenary presentations given by Boston University professors with expertise in the realms of education and philosophy. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of what it means to educate for character.

For more information and program details, contact Lauren K. Terry, Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character, Boston University, 621 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02215, Tel: (617) 353-3262, Fax: (617) 353-4351,

E-mail: lkterry@bu.edu, caec@bu.edu, or visit the CAEC website at : www.bu.edu/education/caec.

CHARACTER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

- **NJ School of Character® Award Application Deadline: January 16, 2006**
Modeled after the National Schools of Character Awards Program sponsored by the Character Education Partnership (CEP), the NJSOC program will recognize one or two K-12 schools or districts annually for demonstrating outstanding character education initiatives that yield positive results in student behavior, school climate, and academic performance. In addition to receiving the New Jersey School of Character award, the NJSOC recipient will advance to the national level competition.

Applications must be postmarked no later than **January 16, 2006**. For more details including program guidelines, eligibility, benefits and NJSOC application, visit the NJCCE website at <http://www.nj-charactered.net/>.

Support for NJSOC is made possible by the New Jersey Department of Education, Character Education Partnership and The John Templeton Foundation.

- **CEP Promising Practices Deadline – March 15, 2006**
As part of the National Schools of Character® Awards program, the Character Education Partnership (CEP) gives Promising Practices Awards to schools and districts in the United States and elsewhere for implementing *unique* and *specific* strategies in character education. New Jersey currently leads the nation with more CEP awards than any other state in the country (44).

Applications for *Promising Practices* awards are due on **March 15, 2006**. Applications and the

Character Education Quality Standards can be downloaded from the CEP Web site at www.character.org. Schools or districts may submit a *specific* and *unique* best practice for review. If selected, the school receives an award citation and the practice is included in CEP's annual book/CD. The school also receives a copy of the book/CD.

Support for NSOC is made possible by the UAW-GM Center for Human Resources. For more information, call CEP at 800-988-8081 or 202-296-7743, ext. 10.

CHARACTER EDUCATION RESOURCE

- **2005 National School of Character: Award-Winning Practices**

The goal of the National Schools of Character (NSOC) program is to disseminate model practices in character education to schools and school districts across the United States. For seven years, the Character Education Partnership (CEP) has recognized approximately 10 public and private schools and school districts (K-12) in the United States as models of effective character education.

The 2005 NSOC publication is a compilation of this year's winning programs, including in-depth descriptions of their character education efforts. The format this year is new, adding the Promising Practices on an accompanying CD rather than in the print part of the book. This format allows CEP to recognize and include more than 100 Promising Practices in the publication, twice as many as in the print format. A downloadable version is free on the CEP website at: www.character.org and includes reproducible pages of sample lessons, evaluative tools and surveys developed and used by the NSOC award-winners.

GRANT & FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- **Youth Service America Projects**

- **Disney Minnie Grants**

Youth Service America and Disney are offering the Disney Minnie Grants for youth across the globe. The grants of \$500 are for youth (ages 5-14), or the teachers, schools, and organizations that engage them, to implement community service projects on National & Global Youth Service Day, April 21-23, 2006. For the application and to find tools and resources regarding how to apply and win a grant, please go to: www.ysa.org/awards or email MinnieGrant@ysa.org. The postmark deadline is January 13, 2006.

- **YSA Youth Venturers Creating Sustainable Community Service Projects**

Youth Service America and Youth Venture are teaming up to make every day National & Global Youth Service Day. Young people will be offered the opportunity to create sustainable National Youth Service Day projects, April 21-23, 2006. YSA and Youth Venture are offering funding to enable young people to engage in community service. Twenty five awards of up to \$1,000 in start-up funds will be available to young people (ages 12-20) who want to create new, sustainable and civic-minded organizations, clubs or businesses ("Ventures"). These Ventures must be youth-led and designed to be a lasting asset to the community. YSA Youth Venturers are required to host a National Youth Service Day event on National & Global Youth Service Day. Applications are available at: www.youthventure.org/ysa. Applications must be received by 12:00pm on December 19, 2005. It is encouraged (but not required) that all applications be submitted electronically.

- **State Farm Grants**

The State Farm Companies Foundation offers grants to K-12 public schools for projects focused on one of three areas: improving teacher quality, integrating service learning into classroom curriculum, and incorporating established criteria to improve the effectiveness of school systems. The application deadline is January 15, 2006. For complete details, visit: www.statefarm.com/foundati/foundati.htm.

- **ING Unsung Heroes Awards Program**

The ING Unsung Heroes awards program recognizes those classroom heroes who take teaching to new heights and make learning fun. Each year, ING presents 100 awards totaling \$240,000 to help fund innovative classroom projects nationwide. Each project is judged on its:

- Innovative method
- Creativity
- Ability to positively influence the students

100 finalists are selected to receive a \$2,000 award, payable to both the winning teacher and his or her school. At least one award is granted in each of the 50 states, provided at least one qualified application was received from each state. Winners are selected by Scholarship America, a national non-profit educational support and student aid service organization. Of the 100 finalists, three are selected for additional financial awards: \$25,000 for first place; \$10,000 for second place; and \$5,000 for third place. Applications can be downloaded from the ING website at: <http://www.ing.com/us/aboutING/communityconnections/ineducation/index.htm>.

Questions regarding the awards program should be addressed to Scholarship America: Phone: (507) 931-1682 or (800) 537-4180. The deadline for the 2006 application is May 1, 2006.