



Schools of Character Academy



by characterplus

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The **Schools of Character Academy (SOCA)** is an in-person leadership team experience designed to ignite a movement of character-rich schools across the globe. **Grounded in the 11 Principles of Character Education Framework**, SOCA equips leadership teams—principals, directors, and organizational leaders—to grow in purpose, integrity, and connection while shaping cultures of trust, clarity, and belonging. Through reflection and interactive learning, over the course of 4-6 full-day sessions, teams will learn how to:

- ★ define and model shared values
- ★ build caring and collaborative communities, and
- ★ create sustainable structures that foster thriving school cultures.

Every experience emphasizes core values, strengthens community partnerships, and develops the habits of character that allow people and organizations to flourish. At the academy's conclusion, schools and districts will be well-positioned to work toward recognition as National and International Schools of Character, leading the way in creating environments where both staff and students feel valued and empowered.

The **11 Principles of Character Education** provide a proven framework for cultivating thriving school communities where character is woven into every aspect of learning and leadership. Together, they guide schools to define and live out core values, create safe and caring environments, foster student voice and moral action, and ensure that staff, families, and communities are fully engaged partners. The principles also emphasize aligning systems and curriculum with character, nurturing intrinsic motivation, and committing to continuous reflection and improvement. At their core, the 11 Principles ensure that character education is not a program but a culture—sustainable, systemic, and transformative for both students and adults.

SOCA Waypoints and Essential Experiences

To bring this vision to life, the SOCA experience is structured around **six intentional waypoints** that guide teams through the journey of building character-rich schools. Each waypoint serves as both a marker and a catalyst—helping participants reflect on where they are, envision where they want to go, and how to take purposeful steps forward. Together, these waypoints create a coherent pathway that blends personal growth, team alignment, and systemic culture-building, ensuring that schools leave the academy not only inspired but also equipped to lead the transformation toward becoming recognized **Schools of Character**.



1. Charting the Journey: Setting the Course for Character

The journey to schoolwide character excellence begins with knowing where we've been and where we're going. This module invites school leaders to engage in self-reflection, assess their school's current alignment to character principles, and collaboratively design a roadmap for implementation. Leaders examine past milestones, identify barriers, and co-create a clear vision that centers character and human flourishing. This stage lays the groundwork for intentional, proactive character education planning (P3) based on core ethical values (P1) and sustained by continuous improvement (P11).

2. Grounded in Purpose: Living Our Core Values

At the heart of any thriving character community is a shared set of values. In this module, schools define and elevate the values that guide decision-making, policies, and everyday behaviors. Through structured dialogue and schoolwide engagement, leaders cultivate clarity, alignment, and commitment to the shared values. The goal is not only to articulate values (P1) but to live them collectively through rituals and routines (P3) as well as through relationships (P4). This work also promotes shared leadership (P8).

3. Leading with Connection: Building Trust and Belonging

Character leadership lives in relationships. This module strengthens the relational foundation of school communities by building emotional intelligence, empathy, and trust among staff and students. Leaders are equipped with relational leadership practices that foster belonging (P4), model character in action (P9), and elevate intrinsic motivation among students (P7). Teams learn how to navigate conflict, support wellness, and lead with care, because a culture of character begins with how we treat one another.

4. Building What We Believe: Aligning Systems for Character

To move from aspiration to integration, schools must build the structures that embed character into daily operations. This module supports leaders in auditing and redesigning systems (P11)—curriculum, discipline, hiring, and instruction—so that they align with character values. Opportunities for moral action (P5) are intentionally embedded into academic and extracurricular programming (P6). Leadership teams engage in proactive planning (P2) and shared ownership of system-level change (P9), ensuring character education is reinforced at every level.



5. Culture in Action: Empowering Collective Leadership

School culture is the air we breathe—it shapes how people feel, connect, and behave. This module activates the collective power of students, staff, and families to create a culture of belonging, service, and leadership. Character is lived through symbolic rituals, student voice, and service learning (P5), while belonging and intrinsic motivation are intentionally nurtured (P4, P7). Leadership is distributed (P8), and students are empowered to lead, serve, and grow as moral agents within a supportive community.

6. From Vision to Impact: Sustaining What Matters

Vision alone isn't enough—schools must measure and sustain their progress. This module equips leaders with tools and strategies to track character-related goals, assess impact, and engage families and communities in the journey (P10). Through data-informed reflection, leaders ensure continuous growth (P11) and build a culture of feedback, celebration, and renewal. The focus here is on ensuring that character education is visible, measurable, and lasting.

These modules provide a flexible, looping pathway through the Schools of Character Academy Journey. Each entry point is anchored in practical tools and strategic leadership aligned to the 11 Principles setting the leadership teams up for success to implement the work into their school communities.



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Academy Logistics

The Academy is offered twice annually in St. Louis, MO. For the 2026 year, the academy will be offered June 15-19, 2026 or December 7-11, 2026.

It is a week-long, in-person learning experience.

Sample Schedule:

Day 1: Monday

The Academy begins at 3:00PM and ends at 8:00PM after an included dinner experience.

Day 2: Tuesday 8:30-4:00

Team Leadership Learning Sessions

Day 3: Wednesday 8:30-4:00

Team Leadership Learning Sessions

Day 4: Thursday 8:30-4:00

Team Leadership Learning Sessions

Day 5: Friday 8:30-12:00

Team Leadership Learning Session and Planning

12:30-2:30

Optional Sessions

Location:

CharacterPlus Office and Training Center in St. Louis, MO
2025 Craigshire Rd, St. Louis, MO

Audience:

Leadership Teams from networks, institutions, and schools (2-4 leaders per team)

Cost:

\$1,250 per participant (includes all sessions, Monday dinner, continental breakfast, lunch, and training supplies for all other days)

Maximum Participants:

32 leaders - Registration closes once full

Optional Follow-Up:

School teams may schedule additional implementation coaching to guide continued work. Networks and Districts may partner with CharacterPlus to bring the SOCA experience to their location and offer it for large leadership teams.





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Register with QR Code Below

