

Meade School District 46-1
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The Character Speaks calendar of the Meade School District has been selected as a promising practices award winner by the Character Education Partnership. The calendar was selected because it encourages ethical, social and academic growth of K-12 students through character education and because it can serve as a model for others to replicate and integrate into their character education initiatives.

The calendar is an outgrowth of a grant the school district received from the state in 2002 to pilot character education concepts and strategies within the school and to also integrate character education practices within the community.

A steering committee was formed and after receiving public input, it was decided to disseminate character education messages via a calendar with each month representing a different character trait. Each month also includes photographs, quotes and facts that reinforce that month's character trait.

The calendars, which are distributed free of charge, can be seen in schools, offices, homes and retail business throughout the Meade School District. Students not only see teachers and school staff modeling the principles of good character but community members as well. To many, the calendar serves as a daily reminder of the character message and the traits that everyone should embrace.

"I see teachers using this calendar daily as a teaching tool to reinforce good choices," said June Reilly, Drug Free Schools coordinator for the Meade School District. "It is an invaluable resource for us."

The response to the calendar was so favorable that the school district continued it even after the grant expired. When calendar funding became critical, a community coalition, Action for the Betterment of the Community Committee (ABC), assumed financial responsibility. ABC continues to collaborate with the Meade School District in producing the calendar.

The school district will be recognized at the National Forum on Character Education set for October in Arlington, Va.

The Character Education Partnership is a national advocate and leader for the character education movement. Based in Washington, D.C., it is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonsectarian coalition of organizations and individuals committed to fostering effective character education in the nation's K-12 schools.