A Holistic Education Program

Character Education in Maryland
A Summary Review and Recommendations

Synopsis: Character education is a proven and necessary ingredient in a successful school. It is an important public response to the workplace needs of employers, to the wishes of families and educators for peaceful classrooms, and to the personal development needs of children.

INTRODUCTION

Although there have always been some apprehensions about perceived declines in personal and community values, today many thoughtful people ask whether there have been substantial negative changes in recent decades. Although it is difficult to pinpoint when there was a shift in our character ideals paradigm, when a range of national values may have been significantly altered, some point to the late nineteen sixties and seventies. If so, that paradigmatic cultural shift, as with most dramatic changes, may have had both good and bad consequences. The most obvious of the good was the increase in the personal rights of men, women, and children. Other consequences may not have been as beneficial. As we celebrated increased personal autonomy and individual freedom, many believe we may have sacrificed too much of our traditional sense of community, our collective notions of patriotism and civility and community voluntarism, our moral compass, our ethical code of conduct in the workplace, on the athletic field, and in schools, and our respect for the property, dignity and rights of others. Responsibility for family and sexual conduct has seemingly been diminished by popular culture. Children are increasingly at risk because of disrupted families and the absence of responsible adult guidance. Of course, this is not to suggest that our nation isn't daily benefiting from a vast population of honest, dutiful and caring citizens. The question is whether more people are now willing to accept lowered standards in a variety of circumstances in the workplace, in schools and in personal and community relationships. In 1979, the General Assembly of Maryland responded to this question by Senate Joint Resolution 64.

Recent History of Character Education in Maryland

On May 16, 1979, the Governor of Maryland approved SJR 64 sponsored by State Senator Lawrence Levitan of Montgomery County. The Resolution established a balanced and diverse study group called the Values Education Commission. The legislature had found deterioration "in the normal standards of individual behavior and violations of public trust."*(1)* The Commission's mandate was "*to identify and assess ongoing programs in morals and values education in the schools of Maryland,*" and to make recommendations to reinforce "*our traditional adherence and devotion to high standards of moral and ethical conduct.*"*(2)*

The Commission took the view that "*the public schools are appropriate, indeed necessary, institutions in a democratic society for defining and encouraging character and citizenship values... (and) that while the schools cannot supplant the role played by the family and religion in values education, ...they can reinforce positive attitudes and behavior and counteract negative influences on the students," (3)* The Values Education Commission reported to Governor Harry R. Hughes in 1983, recommending that attention be given in schools to two sets of "objectives:"

Character Objectives

1. Personal integrity and honesty rooted in respect for the truth, intellectual curiosity, and love of learning.

2. A sense of duty to self, family, school, and community.

3. Self-esteem rooted in the recognition of one's potential.

4. Respect for the rights of all persons regardless of their race, religion, sex, age, physical condition, or mental state.

5. A recognition of the right of others to hold and express differing views, combined with the capacity to make discriminating judgments among competing opinions.

6. A sense of justice, rectitude, fair play and a commitment to them.

7. A disposition of understanding, sympathy, concern, and compassion for others.

8. A sense of discipline and pride in one's work; respect for the achievements of others.

9. Respect for one's property and the property of others, including public property.

10. Courage to express one's convictions.

Citizenship Objectives

1. Patriotism: love, respect, and loyalty to the United States of America, and the willingness to correct its imperfections by legal means.

2. An understanding of the rights and obligations of a citizen in a democratic society.

3. An understanding of other societies in the world which do not enjoy the rights and privileges of a democratic government.

4. Respect for the U.S. Constitution, the rule of law, and the right of every citizen to enjoy equality under the law. An understanding of the Bill of Rights and a recognition that all rights are limited by other rights and by obligations.

5. Respect for legitimate authority at the local, state and federal level.

6. Allegiance to the concept of democratic government as opposed to totalitarian rule. A recognition that such government is limited by the separation of powers and by the countervailing role of other institutions in a pluralistic society—principally the family, religion, the school, and the private sector of the economy.

7. Recognition of the need for an independent court system to protect the rights of all citizens.

8. An acceptance of all citizenship responsibilities at the local, state, and national levels and a commitment to preserve and defend the United States and its democratic institutions.

The Values Education Commission had further intended to "examine the conditions in our public schools to determine to what extent these objectives are indeed met and to what extent conditions in the schools fall short of meeting them." *(4)* That examination was not feasible after the life of the Commission expired in 1983. However, the Maryland State Department of Education responded favorably to the Commission's recommendations and encouraged each school system in Maryland to adopt them.

Dr. Robert Y. Dubel, then Superintendent of the Baltimore County Public School System took an early initiative in that county and asked his Associate Superintendent, Dr. Mary Ellen Saterlie, to chair a Task Force on Values Education and Ethical Behavior. This twenty person group included educators, parents and business representatives and conducted open hearings. Its report, **1984 and Beyond- A Reaffirmation of Values**, influenced in part by the report of the Values Education Commission, proposed a "common core of values" for inclusion in the instructional fabric of every school in Baltimore County. *(5)*

The need for character education has intensified since the 1980s. As recently as October 19,1998, the Josephson Institute of Ethics reported an extensive survey of 20,000 middle and high school students. The findings were both encouraging and discouraging.

Encouraging because many of the respondents were at least aware of the ideal of good character; but discouraging because of the apparent disconnect between the acknowledgement of character ideals and actual behavior. For example, while acknowledging that stealing is wrong, 47% of the respondents admitted having stolen in the preceding year, a significant increase over the 39% findings in a similar survey two years earlier in 1996. Seven of every ten reported cheating, and 73% acknowledged repeated lying. *(6)* A Public Agenda survey of youths and adults presented evidence that:

> *Americans believe too many youngsters today lack basic values...More people today than two years ago say that failing to learn values such as honesty, respect, and responsibility is the most serious problem affecting kids. ... [L]ess than half of adults and only a third of teens believe the next generation will make America a better place.(7)*

Other evidence may be equally alarming. A recent survey found that employee theft at major retail stores increased by more than a billion dollars in only one year, from 1999 to 2000, and that it is responsible for more than 46% of inventory loss- more than is attributed to shoplifters. In 1999, 66,600 employees were caught stealing, and in 2000 that number grew to 73,300- just within the major chain stores, and at a cost to the companies of between $20 billion and $40 billion a year.*(8)*

The Business Community- The future workforce

In 1990, the character, or values, education movement attracted the interest of the business community which was increasingly concerned, not only about theft, but about the impact of a decline in fundamental workplace values on their complete operations. The absence of a strong work ethic and basic respect for honesty was of serious and obvious importance to business; and a recent survey revealed a direct link between an employer's ethics and an employee's loyalty.*(9)* Led by respected business leaders, including architect Mark Beck , investment banker Samuel Hopkins and builder L.H. DeGarmo, among others, *(10)*, representatives of the business community joined with educators, religious, including Bishop William C. Newman, and civic leaders on The Community Values Task Group. It had been formed following a January 24, 1990 Conference on Workforce 2000, convened by the Baltimore Regional Council of Governments. It was one of five task groups formed by that Conference "to identify conditions of the workforce which must be met in the next decade in order to assure competitive economic growth of the region and the resulting higher quality of life for all residents." Dr. Mary Ellen Saterlie, who had managed the successful program in Baltimore County, was invited to chair the Task Group On Community Values. Its October 1991 Report was entitled: Values: The Foundation of Workforce Vitality.

It included an important commentary by Mr. Hopkins noting the importance of strong character ideals in the successful business careers of many of the Baltimore region's historic business leadership and strongly supported the formation of a group to give focused and continuing attention to character education in Maryland. That was done pursuant to a proposal formalized on January 20, 1992. *(11)*

To implement the recommendations of the Community Values committee, the Maryland Center for Values Education was organized in 1992 by an equal number of business, civic and education leaders.

The Center, later renamed the Maryland Center for Character Education [MCCE], was given a threefold mission, in addition to its principal purpose of encouraging character education in Maryland: (1) help prepare teachers for character education, (2) develop library resources, and (3) encourage research on the utility of character education. *(12)*

It continues that work today, cooperatively with the State Department of Education, whose leader, Dr. Nancy Grasmick, has been an enthusiastic supporter of character education, by supporting successful on-going county character education programs, and by encouraging character education in those school systems where it may not be realizing its potential. The Center continues its interest in establishing a library of resources and collaboration with like minded organizations locally and nationally. To succeed, the Center would benefit from greater business sector support. Recently it found important support in First Union- Wachovia, whose Regional President, J. William Knott, chairs the MCCE Advisory Board.

Support continues for the Center within the business community because, as important and enthusiastic and productive as the State Department of Education's character education program has been, particularly while partially funded by a federal grant, *(13)* it is believed that the private sector must be more strongly involved. Business leaders have joined parents, teachers and civic leaders in support of school based initiatives in the face of periodic bureaucratic pressures to dilute character education for budgetary reasons or to accommodate other perceived or real educational priorities. *(14)*

An example of the shifting priorities problem was seen in Baltimore City. This writer was told by several teachers and school administrators that they had to discontinue needed character education to allow more time for MSPAP test preparation during the late 1990s, only to later learn that MSPAP was to be discontinued and replaced by another federally mandated test. *(15)* A similar comment was made to this writer by a Baltimore County middle school assistant principal who expressed regret that character education had lost out to other priorities in her school, where she believed it would greatly benefit the students, particularly by giving attention to the specific character ideals of respect and perseverance. *(16)*

The overwhelming anecdotal evidence is that classroom teachers believe that character education is not a low priority subject, a candidate for going in and out of a Superintendent's priority drawer, depending upon the prevailing winds. If it is low priority, they argue, then so too must be maintaining classroom discipline, ending bullying, learning motivation, respecting teachers, promoting honesty in test taking and encouraging other values that establish the learning environment, nourish good citizenship and inculcate proper workplace and community attitudes.

At the national level, the former chairman of McDonnell Douglas, Sanford McDonnell, as chairman of the Character Education Partnership, expressed his motivation this way:

Kids in schools are getting values transmitted to them one way or another, and unless they are taught about values, they get the message that values aren't really that important- or may decide to model themselves on the negative values they see glorified on television or on the streets. (17)

The Education Community- the school environment

A 1997 survey of veteran teachers in America found that those teachers believed that they had witnessed the following percentage declines in desirable character traits in their students: Less respectful- 81%, less ethical- 73%, less responsible-65%, and more self centered-60%. *(18)*

According to the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development approximately one-third of surveyed adolescents had considered suicide, *(19)* and single parent and two working parent homes had increased from 20% in 1950 to 70% in 1980 resulting in a substantial reduction in the time children spend with adults, far less than is spent with other children or watching television. The study also reported that within a sample of 10 to 16 year olds one fourth had been assaulted or abused in the previous year. 28% of eighth graders acknowledged being drunk at least once, and, in that same age group marijuana use doubled between 1991 and 1994. *(20)*

The daily reality behind these statistics was, of course, well known to classroom teachers. Mention has already been made of the strong initiative of former Superintendent Dubel to reincorporate basic values in the instructional programs of Baltimore County. Beginning in 1983, initiatives were also taken in other school districts and private schools. For example, such efforts were undertaken in Baltimore City, *(21)* but on a more episodic basis because of periodic changes in school governance and shifting priorities as the system coped with many urban school complexities, particularly the virtual disappearance in some schools of parental involvement. However, in 1992, City Superintendent Walter Amprey gave strong attention to character education and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Maurice B. Howard was given responsibility for this important task. *(22)* Dr Howard enthusiastically and ambitiously led the way and Character Education, as it came to be called, was a notable element in City schools under his leadership and that of James Sarnecki until 1999. *(23)* During much of that time in the City an Oversight Committee of citizens regularly visited the schools to observe character education and learn from the principals, faculty, and students the best approaches to character education. During those school visits it became clear that the schools were serious and effective in their character education work, and that it was enthusiastically included in the school day. *(25)*

Other counties also moved forward, but not all at the same pace or with the same dedication. Not surprisingly, and as predicted by the Values [Levitan] Commission, *(26)* much depended upon the enthusiasm of individual teachers, principals and superintendents. *(27)* It is reasonably argued that the Superintendent is most critical. If she or he does not give attention to it, and by more than a "wink and a nod," character education falters. Carroll County is a good example of the importance of supportive superintendents. The County Superintendent, Dr. Brian Lockard, made it clear that character education was an important priority and supported and encouraged the efforts

of the individual schools. *(28)* On the Eastern Shore, business leader Richard Allen has had success in many counties there with a nationally respected approach called "Character Counts." *(29)* This approach calls upon the combined resources of the schools, families, communities, and businesses to bring character ideals to the full civic community, with particular attention to the young citizens.

 Despite recurrent budget cuts and administrative shifts, Montgomery County's character education program excelled because of the talent and dedication of Doreen Rubin, who had been assigned that specific task. Mrs. Rubin, without a supportive budget, *(30)* but with a supportive Board of Education Policy formulated in 1998, was responsible for character education in 190 Montgomery County public schools. Her responsibilities may be typical and deserve mention. She organized an excellent annual character education conference, led a county-wide coordinating committee of educators, parents and community leaders that met quarterly, coordinated an elementary prevention network group interested in 85 schools, consulted with teachers and counselors regarding appropriate materials compatible with curriculum, and wrote a monthly article for the Superintendent's publication. *(31)* The Prince George's County school system encouraged character education and, like Montgomery County, assigned it to a specialist. That system had an excellent character education director- Jacqueline Ringgold Jones; but its program has been buffeted by the changing winds of budget priorities. Other standout educators in that county, like former Principal Mary Curtis Aranha, who has achieved national prominence in character education, were encouraged to do extraordinary work in character education. *(32)* Principal Aranha *(33)* sought to make her school, in her words, "a good place to be." That phrase became the school's goal and motto as she and her staff focused on creating a good learning environment in each classroom by encouraging attention to basic concepts such as mutual respect, cooperation, recognition and related values. In her book, A Good Place To Be, *(34)* she reported the practical consequences of the character education program she implemented in her school:

> *" We saw small changes the first year, and larger changes in three years. The stack of discipline referrals- as many as twenty per day- got smaller and smaller, to the point we had to deal with perhaps one referral each month. The number of suspensions- as high as thirty one year- dropped to one or zero per year. The attendance figures climbed for both students and staff. … Parents began taking their children out of private and parochial schools and putting them in our school." (35)*

In the nearly two decades since the 1983 Report there has been some faltering but also much positive activity. It is reported by the Maryland State Department of Education [MSDE] *(36)* that since the 1983 Values Education Commission Report, all of Maryland's school systems claim some positive response to the Commission's recommendations, including ten school systems now reporting character education in every school. But this beauty might sometimes be only in the eyes of the beholder. School systems are largely free to define character education and a definition can be so general as to permit watered down and ineffectual approaches. In fact, typically each school is free to design and implement its own program. At the state level, MSDE was strongly encouraged and supported by Lt. Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend to continue the inclusion of character education in its mission. This resulted in the creation of a small MSDE staff

dedicated to character education in Maryland. The Governor, with the support of the General Assembly, included $300,000 in recent MSDE budgets for character education.

In 1996 the State received federal funds to organize a concentrated effort in Baltimore City and four counties - Baltimore, Prince George, Frederick, and Calvert. The high suspension rates in those school districts were alarming. 5.7% in the City, 6.5% in Baltimore County, 6.2% in Calvert, 11.6% in Frederick, and 11.6% in Prince George's County. Those percentages translate to 356,340 student suspensions in one school year. [37] Statewide statistics were also cause for concern. 7,394 students were suspended for classroom disruption, 15,231 for disrespect and insubordination, and 23,617 students were suspended because they physically attacked someone. The program, Maryland Partnership in Character Education, [38] was subjected to objective evaluation of its effectiveness during the years 1998 through 2000 by an independent consultant, West Mesa Associates, Inc. of Hardy Virginia. The report was a positive one, specifically documenting improved school learning climates and reduced discipline problems. In its words:

> *school climate… improved dramatically after character education was introduced, and that improvement was maintained over the next three years.* [39]

> *…secondary school suspension rates declined from 1998 through 2000 in four of the   five Partner districts.* [40]

Educators support character education for two notable reasons, among many. The first reason is that many are convinced that a strong character education program contributes to the stability of a school. The referenced Maryland State Department of Education statistical study bears this out. [41] Similar effects have been documented in schools outside the MSDE Partnership Program, for example, the experience of Pocomoke Middle School in Pocomoke City, Maryland. That school enjoyed an overall decline of 43% in disciplinary referrals from 1999 to 2002. [42] The Pocomoke success was attributed, in part, to a $20,000 grant which enabled the school to organize an effective School Improvement Team that gave heightened attention to character education materials (books, videos and graphic materials), curriculum, staff development, mentoring and peer programs.

This has been the experience in other states as well. For example, Lincoln, Nebraska public schools were the subject of a 1998-1999 study that documented a dramatic decline in the incidents of students needing to be removed from the classroom for physical or non-physical behaviors. The decline was attributed to the introduction of a character development program. [43] This same success was reported in San Marcos, California schools after the implementation of a program called "Keys to Total Success." There was significant decline in student pregnancies in one year- from 147 to 20. Performance on a basic skills test improved and the lowest drop out rate in the entire state was achieved. [44]

The character education program in Tyler, Texas was credited for a reduction in school expulsions and violence. A public school teacher in Brooklyn, New York experienced a "huge difference in school tone and climate" as a result of character education there. [45]

A 1991 assessment of a character education program introduced the previous year into 31 elementary and middle schools in Los Angeles, California reported that "administrators stated that all forms of reported discipline problems had decreased, student morale had increased, parents had become more involved in the life of the school, and students were acting more responsibly."

The K-6 program in Weber County, Utah was the subject of a 1993 longitudinal study, which concluded that it reduced problem behaviors by a factor of two-and-one-half times. *(46)* A program in San Ramon, California was also the focus of a longitudinal evaluation. It was found that after five years in the program, "students scored significantly higher on measures of sensitivity and consideration of others' needs. In addition, they preferred conflict resolution strategies that were more prosocial." *(47)*

These objective evaluations document the practical advantages of character education. It is considered critical to education that the school and classroom environments be conducive and supportive; and this includes knowledge of and adherence to basic behavioral values such as respect for authority, interest in learning, civility in the classroom, and the absence of bullying. Enormous sums are budgeted for basic education needs in Maryland, but comparatively little to developing that crucial learning environment through character education. The Department of Education budget for Fiscal Year 2002 was $181,559,909. The state aid to local governments for education amounted to $3,538,918,502. *(49)* Only $300,000 was allocated to character education in the MSDE budget. *(50)* The local school districts have flexibility in what they spend on character education from their total local budgets. The amount so spent is not known; but it should be publicized to permit public understanding of each schools system's commitment to character education.

A second reason for educator support, perhaps implicit in the first reason-school stability, is the common sense belief that young people look for some personal conduct guidance even if they, like adults, stray from the standards from time to time. Character Education doesn't alter human nature. But if some ethical guidance can be found in the classroom, particularly guidance that is relevant to the lives of the students, the daily curriculum has a more personal consequence. It must be remembered that in today's world a huge number of students step into the classroom without any character development guidance beyond popular entertainment and peer pressure. *(51)* Families, communities and organized religion have comparatively less influence on their lives; and in many instances, character education is the first time they will have heard of the classic personal ideals of honesty, community service, responsibility, hard work, loyalty, civic duty, and others. Students will tune in if the discussion addresses questions pertinent to their daily lives. *(52)*

Character education must support and compliment character development in the home. Strong character education programs give particular attention to the critical role of families, both in developing an acceptable program and ensuring that its lessons do not end at the school door.

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development gives these ten reasons "why we should teach moral values and develop good character":

There is a clear and urgent need. Young people are increasingly hurting themselves and others and are decreasingly concerned about contributing to the welfare of others.

Transmitting values is and always has been the work of civilization. A society needs values education to survive and thrive. Historically, this is a role shared by home, school, and faith communities.

The school's role as a moral educator is even more vital at a time when millions of children get little moral teaching from their parents and values-centered influences are absent from their lives.

There is common, ethical ground, even in our value-conflicted society.

Democracies have a special need for moral education because democracy is government by the people themselves.

There is no such thing as values-free education.

The great questions facing both the individual person and the human race are moral questions. Of utmost importance: How should I live my life? How can we live with one another?

There is a broad based, growing support for values education in the schools.

Commitment to moral education is essential if we are to attract and keep good teachers.

Values Education is a doable job. (53)

On a practical level, informal surveys of teachers and principals have found near unanimous concurrence with this additional reason :

Character education can be an important force in furthering other educational priorities, especially school safety, school reform, and improved academic performance. (54)

Methodology

There is virtually no evidence, during nearly two decades of heightened attention to character education since the 1983 Values Commission Report that any school in Maryland has strayed onto controversial character education paths. *(55)* There is widespread agreement with the approach recommended by the Values Commission, *(56)* and with this question and answer published by the MSDE:

QUESTION 3: Who decides what virtues will be taught at my child's school?

ANSWER: In collaboration with parents, teachers, and community members, each school will tailor character education to meet the unique needs of the school and local community. In general, character education will focus on the core ethical values which form the foundation of a democratic society: respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, caring, justice and fairness, and citizenship. (57)

This is the approach taken in Maryland. It appears that every school has its own parent-teacher influenced approach, based generally upon a philosophy espoused by State Character Education Director Mary Aranha. That philosophy can be summarized as (1) encouraging leadership by principals; (2) encouraging a welcoming attitude towards character education on the school campus; (3) seeing education as reaching the "whole child," and (4) providing role models for the children who practice the values they teach. This philosophy encourages character education to be woven, "infused," into the full school fabric so every opportunity to teach or model important virtues is taken, whether in history class, on the football field, or off the school campus. *(58)* School systems have used different strategies in the implementation of this basic approach. *(59)* Baltimore City, at one point, used what was called the "Integrated Model," which called for the infusion of character elements into the curriculum, the use of supportive materials "and a focus on adults as role models." In Baltimore County, the "Staff Development Model" has been used, focusing on training teachers to teach ethics to "transform… schools into moral communities."*(60)* Calvert County gave attention to a "School Improvement Model," to encourage the introduction of character education into its schools.

"Character Counts" is a national program designed by the Josephson Institute of Ethics and introduced into Frederick County. It brings parents, teachers and community and religious leaders into a character education program which is focused on six core character traits and emphasizes prevention and intervention. According to the U.S. Department of Education, a recent study concluded that "character education can alter student attitudes towards violence and reduce youth crime, drug use and cheating. Specifically, that the use of physical force declined by 33%, racial teasing by 45%, illegal drug use by 32%, housebreaking by 50%, petty theft by 46%, vandalism by 46%, cheating by 30% and suspensions and detentions declined by 28%. *(61)* This program was also the genesis of character education in five counties *(62)* on Maryland's Eastern Shore, organized and led by retired business executive Richard T. Allen. Mr. Allen is president of Character Counts Mid Shore, Inc, which has successfully engaged business and religious leaders, families and the schools in a total community approach. *(63)* Prince George's County adopted another national program, called "Community of Caring." This was also used in Baltimore City's high schools for a period of time. *(64)* It was developed by the Joseph P. Kennedy Foundation. *(65)*

In addition to the "infusion" model, educators also find much merit in dedicating particular times in a school day, week or month to literally "teach" character ideals and traits. The Maryland Center for Character Education encourages some dedicated, "stand alone" time *(66)* and has endorsed a teaching resource, among others, that gives the classroom teacher a "primer" on character ideals that facilitates focused class discussion of the universal values. The "primer" approach simply and nonjudgmentally states the universal values, without filters or "other world" references and contexts, to encourage students to become self- conscious of specific character ideals and consider how they might apply in their real life experiences, without having to imagine themselves as George Washington or Martin Luther King, or other historical figures. *(67)* This is not to say that presenting ideals as practiced in the lives of historic or contemporary figures as role models isn't of great value. Many successful lives have been critically influenced by

role models, wherever found, and some experienced teachers find it easier to communicate a character ideal by reference to a well known person's life.

However, opinions differ on the value of dedicated character education time with its own curriculum, such as the first fifteen minutes of a particular day or every day. Some educators suggest that character ideals are best taught in the context of daily instruction, the "infusion" approach guided by the Aranha principles discussed above. For example, Henry A. Huffman, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction in Pittsburgh, [68] writes: " A teacher can't establish classroom rules, relate to kids, or discuss a piece of literature without communicating values." In that district, core values were to be written into the K-12 curriculum, a parent centered program was to be initiated, and community service encouraged, believing that "character education must pervade all aspects of a school's operation and influence its ethos."[69]

Other educators suggest, however, that avoiding specific and dedicated character education time periods and materials in the class room is simply a political or bureaucratic accommodation of frequently shifting educational priorities, such as, recently, standardized testing. Without a specified time and distinct curriculum, they argue, the importance of character development is effectively, even if unintentionally, de-emphasized from both the teacher and student perspective. These educators ask: If character education is an important subject, why does it not deserve the same isolated attention given to other important subjects? History, for example, is not taught by "infusing" it into mathematics or English, although good teachers will often find a way to do that. If these other core subjects are assigned particular periods of daily instruction, why not character education? Second, it is argued, if all depends upon every teacher finding ways to present, or infuse, core human values as they teach other subjects, this may be too weak a reed, unless teachers are required to create lesson plans, for, say, English grammar, mathematics or music, that specifically include particular values that "fit" the lesson being prepared. This is not a likely scenario beyond extraordinarily committed teachers and dedicated principals. An additional criticism of exclusive reliance on an "infusion" approach is that it doesn't clearly expose to families exactly what values are being infused. Families have a right to know.

A good description of the "infusion" model can be seen in this excerpt from the Baltimore County Task Force Report.

> *All education is infused with values. The ultimate goal of education is the positive influence of student behavior, and each student's values guide and help determine that behavior. In the process of teaching content and skills, the teacher also demonstrates his or her own values to the students. For example, the teacher who expects silence while individuals speak or study is offering the values of tolerance, courtesy, and human dignity for the students' consideration. [70]*

While it is true that the hypothetical teacher is modeling those values, a reasonable question arises: what exactly are the students receiving or perceiving in terms of character ideals? It would not be unreasonable to suppose that they were simply learning that this teacher wants quiet when others speak. Whether they translate that simple

classroom protocol into the larger values of "tolerance, courtesy, and human dignity," is not so clear. That outcome would appear to require more- some explicit teaching, in dedicated time, of the values expressed in, or implied by, the teacher's Quiet Rule.

The National Association of State Boards of Education has stated its view, in response to the question: "Should character education be infused into the curriculum or taught as a separate course?"

> *Character education ought to be a comprehensive, K-12 approach to developing notable character which is reinforced by all phases of the school environment. It can be approached in a variety of ways so long as the goal is to produce students who understand moral character and incorporate this knowledge into their actions. Character education can be infused into the existing curriculum by using academic subjects as vehicles for examining ethical issues; it can be related to academic experiences through service learning; or, it can be taught by creating a separate curriculum designed to identify, recognize, and reinforce "positive" decisions and actions. States choosing to promote character education in schools could take any one or a combination of these approaches. (71)*

A widely respected national character education expert, Thomas Lickona, Ph.D. *(72)*, has written:

> *There is no single script for effective character education, but there are some important basic principles .The following eleven principles serve as criteria that schools and other groups can use to plan a character education effort and to evaluate available character education programs...:*

> *1. The promotion of core ethical values*

> *2. "Character" includes "thinking, feeling and behavior."*

> *3. An intentional, proactive and comprehensive approach.*

> *4. The school must be a caring community.*

> *5. Students need school centered opportunities for moral action.*

> *6. A challenging curriculum that respects all learners.*

> *7. Intrinsic moral motivation of students must be encouraged*

> *8. School staff must be fully engaged as teachers and role models.*

> *9. Students and staff must provide moral leadership.*

> *10.Parents and community members must be participants.*

> *11.Evaluations of character education should measure these.*

In summary of this point, perhaps acknowledging that the very word "character" is from the Greek word charakter, meaning "enduring marks, traits that can be formed in a person by an almost infinite number of influences," *(73)* it appears that the consensus is that character education should be a blend of both the dedicated time and the infusion approaches, with a strong, proactive connection to families and mentors. This consensus encourages a wide variety of individual school strategies. In some schools, particularly in

lower grades, signage proclaiming a "value of the week", e.g. HONESTY, and related skits, videos, games and awards ceremonies serve to introduce core character ideals to younger students, for the first time in too many cases, and are helpful in reinforcing the values presumably learned at home and the basic teaching philosophy of the school. In the upper grades, there might be greater emphasis on personal involvement, as occurs in student elections and "honor courts," community service, Mock Trial and Youth Legislature programs, *(74)* open discussion of and writing about contemporary problems, such as sexual responsibility, illegal drugs, what ethical values might have been missing or compromised in corporate and government scandals, and why citizens avoid jury duty and voting in elections. *(75)* At all levels it appears that teacher role modeling is crucial; and it is highly recommended that all schools make a special effort to create a "caring and just environment in the classroom and in the school at large." *(76)*

The Maryland Center for Character Education encourages each school system to consult with its families and the community and adapt character education to its own needs and priorities. Each year the Center honors schools and individuals in every school system for particular achievements in character education. One of the awards, now sponsored by First Union-Wachovia, is a specially designed flag which flies on the school campus. The MCCE Awards Luncheon, in cooperation with MSDE, is a popular annual event and showcases the diverse approaches taken to character education in Maryland.

Another issue implicated by methodology is the extent to which teacher training includes character education. Coppin State College and Towson University are two respected teacher education institutions. Neither has anything expressly within its curriculum regarding character education. *(77)* However, both Goucher College and The College of Notre Dame of Maryland have offered such courses. *(78)* A survey of character education materials in the Library of Congress revealed only twelve items. *(79)*

One methodology weakness that this writer and others have noticed in more than one school was the dilution of character education to a weak potion of "do your homework," "don't be late for school," "respect your teacher." Of course, these admonitions are important, and can readily be used as examples in the consideration of particular values; but do they constitute "character education"?

Finally, as to methodology, Maryland's positive experience with character education has not been hampered by futile and divisive struggles to "test" the extent to which an individual student's character has been "improved" by character education. *(80)*

Proficiency in the typical classroom subject, math, for example, is easily measured; but how does one measure, or test, a child's moral or ethical attitude; and against what standard would the measurement be? This report has already alluded to strong indicators of the positive effects of character education, such as decreased disciplinary actions and increased school civility. These improvements alone justify increased attention to character education. *(81)*

Public and Political Support

A national poll asked 1,306 adults their view of whether particular values were appropriate for discussion in public schools. Over 90% supported the teaching of: honesty (97%), Democracy (93%), acceptance of racial and ethnic diversity (93%), caring for friends and family (91%), moral courage (91%), the "golden rule" (90%). *(82)* The only cautionary comment heard regarding character education in Maryland has been the entirely understandable and correct one that such life lessons, particularly those that implicate personal ethics and morals, should be taught at home. The prevailing view acknowledges this; and has concluded that community and family based character education (1) can benefit the many homes which are not sufficient values incubators, to the detriment of society as a whole, (2) will reinforce the lessons taught by caring families, and, (3) will maintain an historically important ingredient of education in Maryland.

Also, public support for character education seems to reflect the community view that, in any event, there is nothing novel about character education in our schools. *(83)*

The novelty has been the recent omission of it. The Howard County Public School System's Task Force on values education expressed it this way:

> *Values education in a public school system is not a new idea. Both Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin outlined systems they believed would develop in students the values necessary for living in a democratic society. The idea that a school could be "value neutral" did not arise until the nineteenth century when a variety of (controversial) programs such as "values clarification," gained wide popularity in education. (84)*

Opinion surveys report parental support for character education so long as it does not propagate religious tenets or inappropriately invade the privacy of students and their families. For example, the Board of Education of Howard County solicited the views of teachers, parents, students and the community regarding its proposed introduction of character education, in the form of 18 "core values,"*(85)* into its curriculum. The average favorable response rate for each value was 89%. *(86)*   When the Baltimore County system considered the re-introduction of character education, it too surveyed parent opinion. 79% of the respondents agreed that it was the "responsibility of the public school system to teach values."*(87)* That County's Superintendent cited a public opinion poll published in Education Week which revealed that 84% of the parents of public school children "believed that school systems have a responsibility for emphasizing values education." *(88)* There are many reliable indicators of strong popular support for the inclusion of character ideals in education. Foremost is the common sense assumption that parents want their children to be persons of good character and they do not want the schools, whether public or private, to negate those values, either actively by contradictory curriculum or negative teacher role models, or passively, by teacher indifference. *(89)*

Honesty, respect, and responsibility taught in the home should be supported by complimentary experiences in the classroom. Because all programs reviewed for this report presented only universally accepted values, or character ideals, similar to those

proposed by the Values Commission in 1983, there has been virtually no public controversy regarding the content of family centered character education in Maryland.

Further evidence of public support was found in a 1994 Baltimore City Grand Jury survey, conducted in cooperation with the Baltimore City Public Schools. It reported strong support for character education in Baltimore City schools. *(90)* As noted above, similar conclusions have been reached in other jurisdictions including Frederick, the Eastern Shore, Prince George and Montgomery counties. This positive experience in Maryland provided a good foundation for a state-federal program, supported strongly by both Presidents Clinton and Bush, continuing the bi-partisan tradition that characterized the original Levitan Values Commission study. Partisan politics has not affected this program in any way.

As noted, a bipartisan General Assembly has supported the inclusion in the budget of $300,000 in recent years for character education, without a hint of controversy and with very positive results where it has been studiously carried out.

Another powerful indicator of public acceptance is the history of the original 1979-1983 Values Commission. It was established by a bi-partisan vote of the General Assembly, its composition was bi-partisan and its members included persons of diverse philosophies and professional interests; but its conclusions were unanimously reached. This bi-partisanship is seen at the highest levels of our state *(91)* and national governments. Both major parties and their nominees have endorsed character education. *(92)* It has not been the subject of significant dissension; and continues to enjoy the enthusiastic support of educators, who were a strong presence on the original Commission. The non-partisan Maryland Center for Character Education, which has taken up the banner of the Values Commission, is composed of equal numbers of business executives, educators and civic leaders. It continues its strong commitment to character education.

This popular support reflects the general attitude of the public, which rightly asks: How can a democratic society thrive if the only values many students learn are from the streets and pop culture? *(93)* How can education thrive if it is not accompanied and supported by life lessons of respect for authority, the value of hard work, toleration and civility? *(94)*The final report of the National Commission on Civic Renewal included these conclusions:

> *the capacity for democratic citizenship must be nurtured in institutions such as families, neighborhoods, schools, faith communities, local governments and political movements…*

> *… democracy requires both individual responsibility and a felt sense of obligation to the common good, … both have weakened dangerously in recent decades and must now be renewed. (95)*

Media Attention

This report has been written in a spirit of support for character education based upon the empirical evidence, and upon public and educator support for this important component of contemporary education. Criticisms have been only of schools that have no character education or whose program has been so diluted as to have little substance as character education. One other criticism might be in order. There may be too little media attention. While there is extensive and valuable coverage of governance, testing, and funding issues in education, character education, and other substantive subjects as well, are seemingly relegated to a subordinate status, at least journalistically*(96),* despite the very strong evidence of the critical role character education can play in educating the children of Maryland

However, to their credit, newspapers and the other media do give "human interest" attention to individual student success stories in local schools; and this has been valuable coverage. In such stories the attention of the reporter and the reader is naturally drawn to the young student who has overcome great odds, to his or her personal triumph, but comparatively less attention is paid to the values climate in which the youngster prevailed. As an example, The Sun of May 27,2002, reported the happy news that public school student Dontay Jackson of Baltimore persevered and succeeded despite severely adverse family circumstances, including multiple foster homes.*(97)* Understandably, the newsworthiness of such stories lies in the personal drama of the student; but the public importance of the story is to be found equally in the forces that shaped and supported that dramatic success. While Dontay's personal fortitude and ambition can be credited for his admission to college, no doubt a particular foster mother and a school counselor, both of whom were mentioned in the story, contributed mightily to that success. They instilled in him some of the values that allowed him to think beyond his immediate family and neighborhood stress and consider what hard work, perseverance, respect for the advice and direction of others and other virtues might bring him. In the life of Dontay Jackson, a basic and successful component of his education was the character building lessons he learned from these two individuals. Those mentors were his character educators without whom he would not likely have succeeded.

Without some encouraging adult in the life of a student, education is, more often than not, doomed. Not every vulnerable student will have the encouragement Dontay Jackson received. For those many students lacking a strong family foundation, a character education program, particularly if it encourages mentoring, might be a crucial life preserver. Mentors and other parental figures can transmit the character ideals that would otherwise, in the lives of thousands of students every year, remain unknown for want of strong value sharing communities and families. The media, in its coverage of education issues, would do well to give stronger attention to the critical contribution character education can make to student success and the need for responsible adults to step forward into the lives of at risk youths.

Undoubtedly, the media, particularly *The Sun*, has done a great public service in giving attention to underfunding, testing and management problems. However, there is a serious risk that if disproportionate attention is given to these problems, the public could be misled to believe that the blame for flawed educational programs can be laid at the feet of these problems, rather than where much of that blame should be placed: the absence of family support, poor learning environments in and out of school, students' failure to turn away from popular entertainments long enough to do homework and outside reading, to name a few. All of these negatives are, or should be, addressed by character education within a holistic education program.

An editorial in The Sun addressed the need to focus on the "basics" of education and seemed to wonder if character education was among those basics. *(98)* If the opinions of teachers and principals is valued, classroom peace is critical to successful educating, and that peace is brought about, at least in part, by the climate of the school, its tone of selflessness which is set by school wide programs that promote desirable virtues, involve families as co-educators, encourage community service, facilitate peer dispute resolution and recognize positive behaviors. If character education is not basic, why is time given to sex education and health issues such as tobacco and illicit drugs? *(99)* If character education is not important, then why devote attention, for example, to the lives of Civil Rights heroes? When a student studies the life of Martin Luther King, he or she is engaged in many dimensions of character education. Dr. King's life and work cannot be confined to "history." As any student of the life of George Washington would attest, the same can be said about him. And if those life studies are appropriate, so too are other equally valuable character education lessons.

Summary and Conclusion

It seems to be just common sense to encourage the inculcation of values in conjunction with the teaching of the traditional educational basics. Dr. Maurice B. Howard, former educator in Harford County, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction in Baltimore City, and Chief of General Curriculum and Arts and Sciences for the Maryland State Department of Education has said that:

> *"academics and character education are closely interrelated. If a school wants reading and writing improvement, it should include a strong character education program with its focus on academics." (100)*

Does character education subtract from classroom time that might be otherwise available for the "basics"? There is neither empirical nor anecdotal evidence that character education is significantly time consuming and "interferes" with other academic pursuits. Nor need it. Character education could involve, depending on the school: posters in the hallways, a 15 minute discussion of particular character ideals, ideas to be discussed with family, out of class service to the community, and reading, writing and history exercises [the other "basics"] that feature good character models or traits.

Developing an effective school program for each day will always be a challenge for educators looking for proper balance, particularly in schools that do not give appropriate attention to homework and the home environment. *(101)* But, the very talented teachers in

Maryland schools can easily meet this challenge if encouraged to do so by principals and administrators. The educational "basics" have always included, for self evident reasons, student behavior. The experience of Allen Elementary School in Dayton Ohio gives witness to this. The school, located in an impoverished section of the city had low test scores, a serious discipline problem, poor teacher morale and little parent participation. A character education program was introduced and, according to a member of the school board, dramatically changed all four for the better. *(102)*

The National Association of Secondary School Principals put the case for character education this way:

> *Our children cannot succeed as students, professionals, parents or community leaders until they first succeed as human beings. (103) Experienced educators do not claim that character education is a magic potion that transforms student behaviors and values. Character develops within a social web or environment. The nature of that environment, the messages it sends to individuals, and the behaviors it encourages and discourages are important factors to consider in character education. Clear rules of conduct, student ownership of those rules, a supportive environment, and satisfaction resulting from complying with the norms of the environment shape behavior. Character educators should not expect character formation to be easy or immediate. (104)*

In recent decades the media and the political community have, with good cause, championed the need for increased funding of public education. There has also been increased public attention to governance issues in low performing jurisdictions, and to uniform testing. It is fair to ask, after so many years of deserved attention to those priorities, whether there isn't something else important missing in our educational policy. The missing ingredient could be the vision of education as a holistic enterprise, giving character education the attention it deserves in light of the evidence that it improves the learning environment and encourages a real family connection to education. No quality educating will happen without these essential ingredients. *(105)*

It seems evident that increased expenditures, reformed governance, better testing, etc. as important as they are, may not yet be fully accomplishing the goals for public education set by our education leadership and every thoughtful citizen. The referenced <u>Sun</u> editorial regarding the importance of the basics in education and the news story of Dontay Jackson's academic success were helpful reminders that educational success requires more than bigger budgets, administrative restructuring, quality teachers, creative teaching methods, better materials and uniform testing, all of which have received due attention in recent decades. It also requires a safe and civil learning environment in the school and supportive adults in the lives of the students. Character education has an important role to play in that regard. Parents, teachers and principals say so. They tell us that parental involvement is a crucial element, and where there are no effective parents, trained and caring mentors can fulfill, at least partially, the parental role, particularly regarding education. They also report that successful character education has a positive impact on the disciplinary climate of the school, allowing teachers to teach and students to learn unmolested by frequent classroom disruptions. This latter, very practical, benefit of character education was objectively determined by a recent and objective evaluation of Maryland's Partnership in Character Education , led by a nationally respected educator,

Mary Curtis Aranha and her able colleague Stephanie Tayman. It is not surprising, therefore, that virtually every school system in Maryland, public and nonpublic, has included character education in some form at various times. There is, however, reason to wonder if the Maryland commitment to character education is consistent and comprehensive throughout the state.

Another Baltimore City Grand Jury, in 1997, composed of a cross section of citizens, concluded:

> *"Character education needs to be taught in grades K-12 and be consistent from grade to grade as will as from school to school. The school system cannot carry this burden alone…. The primary source for character education should come from the home. Character education is directly related to parental involvement…"*

That report continued:

> *"Today's society has changed drastically (compared) to that of a generation ago. Parents of the previous generation were there to provide nurturing and discipline. Today, a lot of urban households possess a looser family structure causing a breakdown in nurturing and discipline. Our children have suffered as a result. Therefore, this joint venture between the families, the schools and the communities to teach character education … is of the upmost importance at this critical time in our society's evolution."*

This has been the influential view of Robert C. Embry *(107)* and the Abell Foundation as well. No one would question the intensity of their commitment to public education. Character education has also benefited from bi-partisan national, state and local political and community support. Much of the Maryland experience can be traced to the 1983 Report of the State of Maryland Values Education Commission. After a three year study, that distinguished and bipartisan panel unanimously recommended a statewide program with particular attention to 10 character objectives, such as personal integrity and tolerance, and 8 citizenship objectives stressing citizen responsibilities in a democracy. After the release of that report, there was much progress in Maryland and nationally to restore character education to support the basic education mission.

Character ideals have always been the subject of classroom discussion. See, for examples, McGuffey's Readers, and the writings of Horace Mann and John Dewey. *(108)* As a young man Benjamin Franklin developed a list of virtues that he believed would contribute to personal contentment. *(109)* George Washington did likewise. *(110)* Every major religion has similar core values that address the important civic question of how human beings should relate to one another for personal and communal peace. *(111)* Plato's cardinal virtues included justice, prudence, temperance and fortitude. Basic values have consistently guided our ethical decisions from Plato's time to this day. *(112)* The Johns Hopkins University currently hosts the Johns Hopkins Civility Project in the belief that "civility is fundamental to the making of a good, successful, and serene life…" *(113)* It also recently made an interdenominational facility available to its students. Character ideals are certainly not a humanistic fad of the 1960s and 1970s, as some earlier critics suggested. To the contrary, it was in those decades that character education faltered, *(114)*

prompting the Maryland General Assembly to create the Values Commission which, after a three year study, called for the full restoration of character education in Maryland schools. Later, in 1992, educators joined with civic and business leaders to organize the Maryland Center for Character Education. These founders were alarmed by the decline in the basic values upon which educators depend for classroom success and which employers demand in the workplace.

As mentioned, the history of character education in Maryland has been remarkably non partisan. No politician has attempted to exploit it and it has been, and remains, to the advantage of every student and parent in Maryland that our national and state political and educational leaders understand the relative importance of character education to the future of our nation. Like some of them, this writer has had the opportunity, as a member of the Baltimore City Character Education Oversight Committee for several years, to witness character education in the classrooms on many occasions. With each classroom experience I became more convinced that it plays a constructive role in achieving the educational goals of our schools. One particular experience at Dunbar Middle School in Baltimore City stands out. A skilled teacher was coping with a typically rambunctious class of middle school students; but as he skillfully led them into a discussion of self esteem, the room quieted and the students became rapt with attention. They will likely remember that class better than many. Lack of self esteem is a significant cause of student failure.

It is useful to remember that the State of Maryland and virtually every county and the City are engaged in an expensive war against illicit addictive drugs. Drug trafficking drives crime, petty and murderous. *(115)* It destroys families and neighborhoods. Character education is already a formidable and successful weapon in that war, although under a different name- "drug treatment." Drug treatment draws addicts back to core humanistic and personal values. It must do so to succeed. It does succeed. *(116)* Judge Thomas Noel, responsible for Baltimore City's Circuit Court Drug Treatment Court, has said:

> *There is no question that character education would have a positive effect and impact on young, impressionable minds coping with the many temptations of modern society. Drug use has escalated significantly over the last decade, and is affecting a younger segment of the community. Character development is a sure way to strengthen the minds of the young and most susceptible, to give them the strength to "just say no!"* *(117)*

Judge Noel's comment echoes the "Comprehensive Strategy" of the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. *(118)*

That strategy includes, as the first two of five principles:

> **Strengthen the family in its role to instill moral principles and support to children.*

> **Support core social institutions (schools, religious organizations, youth service agencies, community organizations) in their role to develop capable, mature, and responsible youth.*

The entire community of Maryland, including families, employers, students, educators and neighbors, has a right to expect that good character ideals, such as avoiding illegal drugs, understanding the potential harm from tobacco, appreciating the consequences of

promiscuous sexual conduct, respecting human diversity in lifestyle, ethnicity and religion, and discouraging violence, bullying and incivility, will be found within every classroom. These, plus traditional ideals of honesty, respect, responsibility, and citizenship, among others, are the content of character education. It would seem that a public, private or parochial school that gives inadequate attention to them may be shortchanging its students and putting its educational mission in jeopardy.

The Hastings Center *(119)* studied character education and concluded:

> *Perhaps the strongest reason for the explicit teaching of ethics is that moral values, ethical principles, and general stances towards the moral life are already constantly being communicated implicitly in the classroom and school as a whole. Yet that form of moral education is often casual, ad hoc, and not subject to rigorous standards….The question is not whether schools should assume responsibility for teaching values but how can they most effectively deal with an issue which they cannot avoid?* *(120)*

The Frederick County Public Schools summarized it well:

> *Schools have always been expected to teach basic values – things like respect, responsibility, truth and justice. Teachers and schools, together with parents and the community, communicate the importance of these values to students in all aspects of school.* *(121)*

"Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom."   **Benjamin Franklin**

"Conscience is to the individual and to society, what the law of gravitation is to the universe. It holds society together, it is the basis of all trust and confidence; it is the pillar of all moral rectitude."   **Frederick Douglass**

Recommendations

1.**BUDGETS**. Although character education budgets at the state and local level are unreasonably low, and should be increased significantly, particularly for teacher training and classroom materials, money is not the principal resource for effective character education. It should not be expensive to introduce basic values and character ideals to students in the variety of ways now available in every classroom. However, Character Education budgets should be no less than a reasonable percentage of the amount devoted to school security.

2**. FAMILY-STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY**. The most important resource in character education is teacher-family-student collaboration. Every school should have express, written agreements [in some schools referred to as "compacts" or "contracts"] with each student and at least one responsible adult, including mentors where necessary, in the life of every student. These agreements should address the importance of homework, reasonable curfews, a good study environment, television limits, and outside reading. Families would commit to proper role modeling at home. Teachers should agree to use every opportunity to share the timeless character ideals upon which this nation relies in its citizens.

3. **PROGRAM CONTENT**. Educators should use character education for more than useful reminders to do homework and obey school decorum rules. Character education is more than that, and it doesn't achieve its full potential if it does not, even in a limited way, influence, or at least inform, the ethical, humanitarian, and communitarian attitudes of students in a consistent and organized manner. The recommendations of the 1983 Values Education Commission remain valid.

4**. METHODOLOGY**. Schools should develop character education curricula and strategies in consultation with parents and the wider community, and should use both the "infusion" and dedicated class time approaches. The development of character education curriculum should be predominately the work of faculty-parent-community teams in each school, reflective of the nature and mission of that school; but a central state character education office is a critically important resource for several reasons. It is best positioned to know what works and doesn't work, and why. A central office can share success stories and effective resources from the entire nation with every school in the state. The presence of a distinct office, even if modest in size, focused on character education, reassures teachers in the classrooms that education administrators recognize its importance. The absence of such an office sends the opposite message.

5. **EVALUATIONS**. Evaluations of character education programs should concentrate on the quality of the teaching rather than "testing" the character development outcome of students, an impossibility in any event. The school's responsibility is to present agreed universal values and character ideals to all students objectively and effectively, not to guarantee the transformation of the character of a child. Reduced disciplinary problems, a good learning environment, and improved academics, among other factors, are reliable indicators of a successful character education program. If a school has significant academic or discipline problems, it would not be logical to de-emphasize character education, to spend more time on testing, etc. The logical course is to strengthen character education and allow it to contribute to a school culture more conducive to academic and behavioral success.

6. **MEDIA**. The media may be giving disproportionate attention to the fiscal and governance troubles of public schools. This may lead to the erroneous impression on the part of students and their families, as well as other citizens, that academic deficiencies are solely the result of finances and politics. Students and families need to better understand that they have educational responsibilities too; and character education is a very useful means to that end. All newspapers and other media might consider the example of *The Baltimore Afro-American* which has devoted entire sections to character education.

7**. SCHOOL CHOICE**. It is undeniable that there is a strong interest on the part of many parents for school choice. It is apparent that a strong motive of these families is to find schools that, among other features, are actively concerned about character development. It is in the competitive interest of public support for public schools that families have confidence that our public schools also care about this important educational priority. Public school students should not be denied the advantages that character education has brought to students in many nonpublic schools.

8. **TEACHER EDUCATION**. The excellent teacher training programs in our colleges and universities should give far more attention to character education as a distinct aspect of curriculum, not just as a blurred subunit of generic offerings such as social studies. Potential teachers should be given the opportunity to understand the importance of character education. They should be allowed to appreciate the variety of possible teaching strategies and to know the available literature and sources for materials and ideas.

9. **STATEWIDE CONFERENCE**. A statewide conference should be convened in 2003, twenty years after the 1983 Values Education Commission Report, to discuss the state of character education in Maryland. Every school, public and non public, should be surveyed to understand who is doing what and with what resources and degree of earnestness. Each of the 24 Maryland subdivisions could present its impressions of the merits and demerits of character education. Teachers without character education experience could learn from experienced teachers and principals. It would be ideal if the conference was scheduled to allow every Maryland teacher to attend in person or electronically. Since such a conference might not be repeated for possibly another two decades, a school holiday to facilitate this would not be out of order. If a holiday was not feasible, credits should be extended to attending teachers. The insights from such a conference could be videotaped and published by the Maryland Department of Education as a resource for teachers in the twenty years to come.

10. **COMMUNITY VOICE**. Local communities should stand strongly for character education because it is the community that suffers for lack of it, both immediately in terms of the school environment and in the long term as students are denied access to important behavioral norms. Any shifts in educational priorities that jeopardize or compromise character education should be announced to the families of students and approved by the local Board. PTAs, teacher organizations, and other similar school based groups should always have character education on their agendas, and not allow it to slip beneath the education policy waves, as it did in the 1970s. The business community has an enormous stake in character education and must show more leadership in insisting on its inclusion in every school.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
I thank the hundreds of parents, mentors, teachers and administrators with whom I have spoken about this report. Please give the Maryland Center for Character Education the benefit of your thoughts about the report, and character education in general. Write to me at 409 Gittings Avenue, Baltimore MD 21212. The support of the Abell Foundation in the printing of this report is greatly appreciated.

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John Carroll Byrnes, Chairman,

Maryland Center for Character Education

June, 2003

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Endnotes

1. Statement of Purpose, Values Education Commission , July 30, 1979.

2. Id.

3. Id.

4. Id.

5. They include: Compassion, Courtesy, Critical Inquiry, Due Process, Equality of Opportunity, Freedom of Thought and Action, Honesty, Human Worth and Dignity, Integrity, Justice, Knowledge, Loyalty, Objectivity, Order, Patriotism, Rational Consent, Reasoned Argument, Respect for Others' Rights, Responsibility, Responsible Citizenship, Rule of Law, Self-Respect and Tolerance.

6 . Josephson Institute, 1998 Report Card on the Ethics of American Youth , October 19, 1998.

7. American Demographics, June 1999, pg.6

8. Survey of 30 retail chains by security firm Jack L. Hayes International, reported in The Daily Record of March 26, 2002.

9. The survey was discussed in a column by business ethicist Jeffrey L. Seglin, writing in The New York Times of July 16, 2000. It was taken by KPMG of Organizational Integrity. One finding was that 81% of employees in an ethically sound working environment would recommend the company to prospective employees; but only 21% of employees of "ethically flexible bosses" would do so .

10. One of these early leaders was Robert McNeish , former Associate Superintendent of Baltimore County Public Schools. Mr. McNeish is Editor in Chief of the MCCE Newsletter.

11. Proposal to Establish the Maryland Center for Values Education, unpublished monograph, Jan. 20, 1992.

12. From A Brief History of the Maryland Center for Character Education, page 1.

13. The State of Maryland benefited from a four-year (1996-2000) federal grant of $998,000.

14. This has been a recurring problem with character education virtually everywhere. Some systems had specialists who were dedicated to the mission of character education; but they were either eliminated in favor of someone who has to carry the character education banner along with other unrelated administrative responsibilities, such as in Baltimore City at one point, or the character education responsibility is diluted by the addition of other administrative responsibilities, such as school safety or some task that has some ostensible character education connection, or funding is reduced or eliminated and teachers encouraged to "integrate," or "infuse," character ideals into all subjects.

15. The nature of this new test requirement is not unlike its predecessor- federal incentives for particularized testing of academic progress.

16. Like other interviewees, this educator declined to allow her name and school to be published, although both are known to the author of this report.

17. The Wall Street Journal, May 10, 1994. The latter portion of this quote is a paraphrase by the reporter, Rochelle Sharpe.

18. *Developing Character in Students*, a published monograph by Dr. Philip Fitch Vincent, 1999.

19. The Center for Disease Control, in 1992, estimated that 19% of high school students considered suicide. It also reported that its survey of 12,000 students in 23 states and territories found that 26% acknowledged carrying a weapon at least once in the preceding month, 11% stating that the weapon was a gun. The Sun, Reuters, October 16, 1992.

20. The Sun, Kathy Lally, "Innocence Dying Younger," December 11, 1995.

21. In the 1980s there was a cooperative effort by the Headmaster of Gilman School and the principal of Roland Park Public to develop a character education program. While the resulting product was adopted at Gilman, permission to Principal Beasley to do the same at Roland Park Public was refused. [Conversation with Roland Park Principal Beasley.] Mrs. Julia Baker has also been credited with pioneering character education programs in the early 1980s. In 1987, James Sarnecki, then Supervisor of Mathematics and the Sciences, was appointed by Superintendent Alice Pinderhughes to establish and chair a Character Education committee of parents, community leaders and teachers. It was recommended that serious attention be given to the program adopted by Gilman, entitled in that school, "The Gilman Experience." However, the committee elected to start anew and, with the assistance of the Abell Foundation, materials were purchased from the Jefferson Center for Character Education [in 1993 located in Suite 240, 202 South Lake Ave. Pasadena CA, 911101 (818) 792- 8130], and to a substantial extent integrated it into the curriculum of the elementary grades. In 1988, Mr. Sarnecki introduced a character education program in Hamilton Elementary-Middle School, of which he was then Principal. He retired in 1994 and, on a contract funded by Abell Foundation, was appointed director of character education in Baltimore City Public School system. When the Abell funding expired, the position was effectively was abolished. A promise was made by the school administration that someone else, equally dedicated to character education, would be appointed to Mr. Sarnecki's position. This promise was not fulfilled, and the City's character education program has floundered somewhat since.

22. Dr. Howard served in public education for 36 years- in the classrooms of Harford County, as Curriculum Supervisor in Harford County, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction in Baltimore City, Chief of General Curriculum and Arts and Sciences for the Maryland State Department of Education, among other notable leadership positions in education.

23. Mr. Sarnecki was Supervisor of Mathematics and Sciences for elementary grades and later principal of Hamilton Elementary-Middle School where he initiated character education in 1988. He retired in 1994, but was called back to service as the City's Coordinator of Character Education, funded by the Abell Foundation, from 1995 to 1999. During those years he very actively administered the program in the City, including convening City-wide teacher conferences to share insights, ideas and resources. These conferences were also funded by Abell.

25. The writer of this report was a member of that Oversight Committee and visited many schools in those years. The teaching was of good quality, the students interested, and the principals enthusiastic and supportive.

26. That Commission devoted much of its report to discussing the roles of teachers and principals, stressing the critical role of the latter in the development of a program in a school.

27. The Maryland State Department of Education engaged a consultant to evaluate the benefits of character education in its Partnership Program that included Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Calvert County, Frederick County and Prince George's County. One of the several notable conclusions reached was that character education should be "institutionalized" in public education, and not be subject to vicissitudes of individual educators. If one principal or teacher or superintendent lacks interest, entire schools, classrooms or school systems could be deprived of the benefits of this important education resource. See Evaluation of the Maryland Partnership in Character Education: Three Year Report, Abstract, page 2, West Mesa Associates, Inc, September 15, 2000.

28. Dr. Lockard served on the Board of the Maryland Center for Character Education until his retirement from the superintendency and his appointment as Dean of Education of Western Maryland College.

29. Mr. Allen is president of RTA Associates in Easton Maryland, where he has been a civic leader. He founded "Character Counts MidShore" in 1996.

30. Mrs. Rubin reported that, as of 2002, there was no explicit character education budget, but that with funds made available from Safe and Drug-Free Schools Grant Funds, she is able to make some useful materials available to her schools. [Electronic message of May 8, 2002 to the writer.]

31. Regrettably, as this report was nearing completion, it was learned that this position was eliminated in Montgomery County public schools for a reason related somehow to smaller classrooms. It is reported that, nevertheless, that county remains committed to character education.

32. Mary Curtis Aranha later became responsible for the state's character education program. She is the author of an influential book: "A Good Place To Be" published by Dude Publishing in 2002.

33. Mary C. Aranha was principal of Benjamin Foulois Elementary School in Prince George's County, Maryland before being named director of the Maryland Department of Education Character Education program. That program, bureaucratically, is situated within the Division of School and Student Services, which among other responsibilities, has a particular concern for school safety- a key consideration in character education.

34. Published in 2002 by Dude Publishing , a division of National Professional Resources, Inc. of Port Chester, New York

35. Id., at page 9.

36. Representatives of MSDE sit on the MCCE Board and have so reported.

37. Abstract, State of Maryland Partnership in Education, pg. 20, undated. School year: 1993-94.

38. This was funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the improvement of Education: Partnership in Character Education. Maryland received one of only four awards which were made nationally in 1996-1997. The amount was $958,027. [MSDE Character Education Fact Sheet No. 21, November 1996.]

39. Id. Report of September 15, 2000. Because of the number of variables in each school, the consultants do not claim that character education was the sole cause of the improvement.

40. Id., page 2, Abstract.

41. West Mesa Associates, Inc. of Hardy VA. presented four reports [November 6 , 1998, January 19, 1999, January 31, 2000, and September 15, 2000] to the Department. These documented an improved learning environment evidenced by reduced suspension and expulsion rates in the schools covered by the MSDE character education program in Baltimore County, Baltimore City, Calvert County, Frederick County, and Prince George's County.

42. Character Education presentation by Paula McCoach , Guidance Counselor at Pocomoke Middle School, May 17, 2002. Ms. McCoach's education experience began in 1976.

43. The program focused on social skills, one of the critical components of a comprehensive character education program. It was the subject of a 1999 study by Kathryn Phillips, a graduate student. An abstract is in the possession of the writer.

44. Momentum magazine, pg. 52, November/December 1993

45. The Wall Street Journal, by Rochelle Sharpe, A20, May 10, 1994.

46. Educational Leadership, Journal of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Nov. 1993, Vol. 51, No. 3, pg.68.

47. Id., 68, 69. This essay, by Professor James S. Leming of Southern Illinois University, provides a useful survey of several character education programs and a good discussion of the difficulties in reliable and objective evaluations of character education programs. He presents these conclusions: "Didactic methods alone- codes, pledges, teacher exhortation, and the like- are unlikely to have any significant effect on character. The development of students' capacity to reason about questions of moral conduct does not result in a related change in conduct…. Character develops within a social web or environment…. Character educators should not expect character formation to be easy…. The majority of programs have

been limited to elementary schools (which he finds "puzzling" in light of the self evident need in secondary schools)….Few carefully controlled evaluations of character education programs exist….

49. State Department of Education Budget, R00AO1. MD Archives web site.

50. The State Department of Education sought a federal grant of $1.7 million to fund three different character education models.

51. This writer served in the Maryland State Senate from 1970 to 1982 and, for twenty years, on the Circuit Court for Baltimore City. Judges who have worked with juveniles would agree with this statement.

52. This report relates such an occasion, when, as a member of the City's Character Education Oversight Committee, the writer sat in on a character education class at Dunbar Middle School. The teacher, an excellent educator, gradually led the class toward the subject of self-esteem; and as he did, the classroom noise, typical for restless middle school students, quieted and the teacher had the rapt attention of every student. It was an amazing experience.

53. *Information Brief* of The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development., Issue 25, June 2001. Source: "10 Reasons Why We Should Teach Moral Values and Develop Good Character" by T. Lickona, 1991*, Educating For Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility*. New York, Bantam Books, pp 20-22. This Association first adopted a position favoring character education in 1954 and, with 1989 and 1993 revisions, it reads as follows:

…students must be prepared to address moral issues in their own lives and to fulfill the moral responsibilities of citizenship. Schools should make basic moral values- including justice, altruism, diligence, and respect for human dignity- a strong unifying theme. All schools should work in partnership with families and other community members to develop and implement character and citizenship programs. Id, pg 7.

54. Id. Pg.6, Esther F. Schaeffer, executive director and chief executive officer of the Character Education Partnership, Washington D.C.

55. It should be noted that the initial development of the programs in Carroll and Frederick counties was the occasion for some controversy because of the perceived absence of community involvement. This was rectified. Also, while the question might strike some today as perplexing, the Values Commission felt constrained to seek an Attorney General's opinion "on whether there are any legal impediments to the teaching of ethical values in the public schools." The July 19,1979 opinion (Attorney General Stephen H. Sachs and Ass't. Attorney General Ellen M. Heller) concluded that there were no constitutional (church-state separation and privacy rights) implications so long as courses did not "foster a 'religion' or secularism…or…intrude relentlessly into a student's inner thoughts…(or) family interpersonal relationships…." The Attorney General further stated: ".. the fact that an educational program teaches moral and ethical views that have their roots in the Judeo-Christian heritage [or, presumably, the Koran, ed.] would not, of itself, make such activity religious in nature." After noting that "moral education has always been 'implicitly' taught in American schools [citing Beredy, Values, Education and the Law, 48 Miss. L.J. 585, 587 (1977)], the Attorney General's opinion further commented:

> *Consistent with this tradition, your Commission is now attempting to formulate broad guidelines for the formal teaching of values in the schools (e.g. self -esteem, a sense of duty, personal integrity, tolerance for the rights of others). This appears to be an attempt to recognize and meet head-on the fact that high juvenile crime rates, cheating epidemics in all levels of schooling, and the 'Watergates' of our nation are indicia that our moral fiber needs strengthening.*

56. This is not to suggest that there are no scholarly critics. One national expert, Alan Lockwood, chair of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is critical of an "unexamined assumption… that the bad behavior of young people is a consequence of their not holding the right values. The notion that behavior flows directly from values in an unmediated way- that is, that if you're behaving badly it means you've got bad values, if you've got good values you won't behave badly- that is simply not true." Lockwood is not an opponent of character education, but he does object to simplistic formulae that ignore the self-evident, that persons with good values can act wrongly. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Curriculum Update, Spring, 1995.

57. MSDE <u>Character Education Fact Sheet</u> No.21 (November 1996)

58. A prominent character education program, Character Counts, prefers to develop a full community receptivity to character education.

59. Individual schools and school systems frequently change their character education programs and approaches for a variety of positive and negative reasons. There is no close monitoring of what each school and district is doing, although the small MSDE Character Education Office does make a good effort to do so.

60. Baltimore County's original task force on character education expressed its proposed philosophy this way:

> *Recognizing that there are many value systems, teachers should use a problem-solving approach to values education with the purpose of enabling students to establish their own moral and intellectual outlooks compatible with their cultural heritage and in keeping with the values the schools hold. Teachers should provide a diversity of viewpoints when presenting subject matter sufficient to enable students to have material on hand that will enable them to examine one view against another.* <u>The Task Force on Values Education and Ethical Behavior of the Baltimore County Public Schools</u>, 5, March 1985.

This approach has many characteristics of the school of thought, often referred to as "values clarification," that presupposes a wide spectrum of values and encourages students to form or "clarify" their own character ideals by picking and choosing among the many optional values. While this "Socratic" approach is a valuable educational tactic within a character education strategy, it might be criticized as avoiding a straight forward presentation of the traditional and universal values, leaving students somewhat adrift precisely when they want direction. For example, one of the many "optional values" might be self-satisfaction; but is a person free to elect that value in all cases, simply because it is their choice? Also, even given that values <u>applications</u> in many circumstances might be arguably relative, are there really "optional" variations of honesty and responsibility, etc?

61. U.S. Dept. of Education <u>Community Update</u>, Vol. 92, October 2001. This program emphasizes trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. Another series of character ideals, proposed by the influential Aspen Declaration in 1992, includes these: respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, caring, justice and fairness, and civic virtue and citizenship.

62. Talbot, Kent, Queen Anne, Dorchester and Caroline.

63. This program was originally funded by a local community foundation. It later established its own non-profit entity to better manage its budget, now approaching $200,000, and its four staff members in several offices, including an excellent administrator, Linda Rajacichgram. This program features, for example, "character coaches," men and women from the community who visit schools and develop dialogue with the students regarding contemporary issues with an ethical dimension. After school programs are also a priority. Serious attention and funding is also given to teacher education, locally and at nationally reputed institutions, and teaching materials for the classrooms. The business community pledges itself to ethical business and workplace practices. Mr. Allen sits on the Board of the Maryland Center for Character Education.

64. Community of Caring in Baltimore City was the subject of periodic evaluations. An evaluation dated July 26, 1999 presents a mixed subjective (self evaluation was a key component) and objective assessment of the program's worth in each of sixteen high schools. As would be expected, there were many successful activities and some weaknesses in the various schools. It was, in other words, a mitigated success according to multiple measurements. But, according to one very critical measurement: all sixteen schools reported an improvement in the "school's climate."

65. These program descriptions are drawn from an undated news release of the Maryland State Department of Education Character Education Office. There is no intention by the writer to suggest that the referenced programs are in place at the time of this writing. There is no published survey or report of what programs are active in every county and Baltimore City. Because of the sometimes fluid nature of character education curriculum, it is difficult to document what is happening in each county and in each school at any

given time; but the MSDE Character Education office does, with very limited staff, make an effort to be informed.

66. MCCE *Newsletter*, editorial, March 2000.

67. An example is *A Book of Values*, published, in its second edition, in 1997. This small booklet was designed to present basic values in nonjudgmental and accessible language and without "heroic" examples or verbose elaborations, except as found in the single illustration that accompanies each value in the publication. The intent is to allow the readers to imagine the role such values might play in their own situational judgments. Its simplicity makes it affordable. This greatly simplified approach is not as popular among publishers who prefer more extensive texts, such as *The Book of Virtues* and *Our Sacred Honor,* both authored by William J. Bennett and published by Simon & Schuster in 1993 and 1997 respectively. The first is of 821 pages and the second 430 pages. While both provide good material for the conscientious character education teacher, neither is likely to be found on the shelf of the typical child or of his or her parent, or teacher. Much of the available character education classroom material appear to be expensive on a per pupil basis and therefore unlikely to be purchased on a useful scale without a serious educational policy commitment and a large scale investment of public education dollars or private philanthropy.

68. Mt. Lebanon School District, Pittsburgh PA.

69. Educational Leadership, Vol. 51, No. 3, November 1993, 25.

70. The Task Force on Values Education and Ethical Behavior of the Baltimore County Public Schools, 1984, page 3.

71. NASBE Policy Update, Vol. 3 No.8, April 1995.

72. *Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education*, by Tom Lickona, Ph.D, Eric Schaps, Ph.D, Catherine Lewis, Ph.D. Published 1996 by Character Education Partnership, 1600 K. St., NW, Suite 501, Washington D.C. 20006. Dr. Lickona is Director of the Center for 4th and 5th Rs, SUNY Cortland, P.O. Box 2000, Cortland NY 13045.

73. *The Moral Compass*, pg.12, by William J. Bennett, Simon and Schuster (1995).

74. The Maryland YMCA Youth and Government 2002 Youth Legislature gave attention to four values in the analysis and debate of various bills: Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility. [The writer is grateful to Beth Lidinsky for sharing her materials from this program.]

75. Former Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction in Baltimore City, Dr. Maurice Howard has written of student community service, referred to in Maryland, the first state to require it, in 1992, as "service learning" : *In Maryland, students participate in systematic activities that result in real assistance to others, as well as personal growth.   … Service can be a means to motivate the unmotivated by nurturing students' nonacademic strengths.* Educational Leadership, Vol. 51, No.3, Nov. 1993, Journal of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

76. The view of Eric Schaps, Esther F. Schaeffer and Sanford N. McDonnell (president, executive director and chairman, respectively, of Character Education Partnership in Washington D.C.) These respected commentators argue that many current character education strategies fall within one of four approaches: "cheerleading" (e.g. posters etc.), "praise and reward" (positive reinforcement, e.g. a prize for good behaviors); "define and drill" (memorization of a series of values); and "forced formality" (requiring adherence to particular rules of conduct, e.g. orderly walking in hallways, standing when an adult enters the room, etc.) These approaches have, in the view of these leaders, only short term advantage if they are not conducted in a school culture that reaches more deeply into student attitudes. Their formula for what "does work" is this: "Most fundamentally, schools must engage and inspire students' hearts as well as their minds, and this requires that schools get better at meeting students' basic needs- their needs for safety, belonging, competence, and autonomy. … (S)tudents will care about a school's goals and values when that school effectively cares for them. Moreover, when they feel connected to school and the people in it, they learn better." [The source of this note is a published Newsletter sent to the writer, without date or title of the publication.]

77. Interviews of Dr. Gregory Bryant , head of Elementary Education at Towson University and Dr. Leontye Lewis ,Chair of the Dept. of Curriculum and Instruction at Coppin State College. Both educators

indicated that some components of social studies might involve consideration of "pro-social" behaviors and that there is also a so-called "hidden curriculum," meaning the encouragement of appropriate conduct in daily exercises such as lining up properly to move within the school. [Interviews conducted by Jeanne Davis for this paper in June 2002.]

78. The Maryland Center for Character Education <u>Newsletter</u>, July 1997.

79. Survey undertaken on the web by Jeanne Davis, for this report, on June 23, 2002. It is fair to note, however, that there are a substantial number of publications related to character education beyond the twelve reported by The Library of Congress, including, for example, the two books by William J. Bennett- *The Book of Virtues* and *Our Sacred Honor*. Such publications are sold at Character Education conferences. A March 2002 publication of the Montgomery County Public Schools , Character Education- Approved Materials for Classroom Use, annotates hundreds of books, pamphlets, videos and graphics designed for character education.

80. The education initiative of the current Bush Administration, "No Child Left Behind," places great stress on testing. It is unclear how this is to be applied to character education supported by federal funds, although there appears to be an applicable exception.

81. A well researched monograph by Jonathan Dune entitled *A Critique of Research Evaluating Moral Education Interventions* discusses the variety of what he terms "moral education" approaches and the considerable difficulty in establishing even a common vocabulary for the purpose of evaluating the success of character education. www.calpoly.edu/~echin/Ed589/StdModels/Jdune.html

82. Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll, 1993. Other more problematic topics received less support: religious diversity (87%), sexual abstinence outside marriage (66%), Abortion rights (56%), Sexual preference & diversity (51%). Published in <u>The Wall Street Journal</u>, A20, May 10, 1994.

83. Character ideals have traditionally been the subject of classroom discussion. Read, for examples, McGuffey's Readers and the writings of Horace Mann. Character development has long been a positive feature of many private and parochial schools; and it appears that contemporary religious schools find favor with many parents, regardless of their religious affiliation, because it is perceived that they give more explicit attention to character development then do public schools.

84. Board of Education of Howard County Values Education Task Force Report, November 20, 1990.

85. Those "core values" were: Appreciation for Diversity, Commitment to Learning, Community Service, Compassion, Democracy, Equality of Opportunity, Freedom of Thought and Expression, Global Responsibility, Honesty, Integrity, Justice, Perseverance, Respect and Care for the Environment, Respect for Human Dignity, Respect for Self, Responsibility, Responsible Citizenship and Self-Discipline. Id.

86. Id.

87. A Report of the Task Force on Values Education and Ethical Behavior of the Baltimore County Public Schools, 1984, page 11.

88. Id., 35. Published Letter of September 16, 1982 from Robert Y. Dubel

89. A teacher who views cheating but chastises only because it is "against the rules," without explaining the ethical basis for a rule prohibiting cheating, is demonstrating indifference in a character education context. So too, of course, is the teacher who ignores student cheating entirely.

90. Baltimore City Grand Jury study.

91. Including the major gubernatorial candidates in Maryland in 2002: Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend and Congressman , now Governor, Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.

92. On November 2 1999, then presidential candidate George W. Bush, called for increased federal support of character education- to $24 million, the incorporation of character-building lessons into federal youth programs, and the establishment of "American Youth Character Awards. [The Josephson Institute White Paper on Character Education, December 23, 2000.] In a State of the Union Address, President Clinton said "I challenge all our schools to teach character education, to teach good values, and good citizenship." [Quoted in a Press Release of the Maryland State Department of Education, undated.]

93. "At the beginning of (1950) there were some 5 million television sets in the United States, a relatively insignificant number. Today (1994) there are approximately 220 million in 98 million homes, 85 % of which have had at least one videocassette recorder. The typical American child now watches television or videos for 25 hours each week, approximately equal to the time he spends in school." Gwinn Owens writing in The Sun of October 26, 1994.

94. It appears that the public shares at least some of the alarm sounded by William J. Bennett, former U.S. Secretary of Education and author of *The Book of Virtues*, in a column he wrote which attempted to quantify "America's Decline." He used eight "cultural indicators" : (1) TV viewing increased from 5.06 hours in 1960 to 7:04 in 1992; (2) SAT scores declined from 975 in 1960 to 899 in 1992; (3) births outside marriage increased from 5.3% in 1960 to 26.2% in 1990; (4) the percentage of children with single mothers increased from 8% in 1960 to 22% in 1990; (5) percentage of children on welfare increased from 3.5% in 1960 to 11.9% in 1990; (6) the teen suicide rate increased from 3.6% in 1960 to 11.3% in 1990; (7) violent crime per 100,000 increased from 16.1 in 1960 to 75.8 % in 1990; (8) the median prison sentence [for selected serious crimes] decreased from 22.5 days to 8.0 days. The Wall Street Journal, Monday, March 15, 1993.

95. A Nation of Spectators, Final Report of The National Commission on Civic Renewal, 1998.

96. This writer has surveyed coverage of education by The Sun over many years. Hundreds of excellent and informative stories have been written about the politics, testing and funding of education. Attention is also paid to various positive and negative school experiences. Comparatively little attention has been given to the demonstrated role of character education in establishing a positive learning environment. Nor, has much attention been paid to the basic contribution of character education to the development of good and caring citizens in a democracy.

97. See The City Paper of August 14, 2002 for several similar stories.

98. The Sun, May 27, 2002. The editorial was headed "First, the Basics" and was focused not on character education, but on the gubernatorial campaign of Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, who had issued a statement on education policy that gave attention to character education. The editorial was apparently intended to chide her, perhaps not so much for her attention to character education, but for the absence of her attention to what The Sun regards as the "basics" of education, but implying, perhaps inadvertently, that character education is somehow not basic.

99. President Clinton's national education policy was enacted in a law signed by the president on March 31, 1994- Goals 2000: Educate America Act. It included these objectives: "Every school in the United States will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning. .. Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children." Monograph, "Goals 2000" received from The White House, April 8, 1994.

100. Letter to the Editor of The Sun, June 2002. Dr. Howard was president of the Maryland Center for Character Education.

101. Malcolm Gladwell, writing in a January 1997 issue of The New Yorker, cites a study documenting that "somewhere between twenty and twenty-seven per cent of the parents of four to six year olds never restrict their children's viewing hours, never decide what programs they can watch, never change the channel when something objectionable comes on, and never forbid the watching of certain programs."

102. "Shaping Character," by Charles L.Scott, a member of the Dayton Ohio School Board, The American School Board Journal, December 1992. This successful program was designed in large part by teachers and included proactive involvement of parents, including by a signed "Agreement" which specified particular responsibilities of the students, parents or guardians and staff. Among other strategies, it set aside 10 minutes each day to focus on particular values, an approach of many Baltimore City schools until it was displaced by statewide testing obligations. It is reported that 150 students were suspended in the year

preceding the program, and only 10 during the year of the program, 1991-92. The author notes the connection between character education and improved test scores as stated by the school principal, Rodolfo Bernardo: …"teachers have more time to teach. By spending less time on discipline and more time on teaching, teachers are able to make greater progress with students." Pg. 30.

103. Stated in an undated publication of Community of Caring, 1325 G. Street , N.W. Suite 500, Washington D.C. 20005

104. James Leming, quoted by Dr. Philip Fitch Vincent, in his book *Developing Character in Students*, 158, Character Development Publishing, Chapel Hill, N.C.

105. It is understood that in some schools in every district there are family circumstances that make it nearly impossible for a child to be receptive to education. More parenting mentors are needed; and even they sometimes fall short of the role of substitute parent. But this sad reality would not justify abandonment of education's traditional role of explaining and encouraging good behavior traits and reaching out to families and aggressively involving them in the educational process. In fact, there is much evidence that is precisely these family disadvantaged children who would most benefit from character education.

107. Mr. Embry was a Member of the Baltimore City Council, President of the Baltimore City School Board and a member of the subcabinet of President Jimmy Carter. He is now president of the Abell Foundation which has initiated and funded many innovative approaches to education and other civic challenges.

108. The Journal of Social Forces, Vol 1, 1923, pg 513, published an article by John Dewey entitled: " The School as a Means of Developing a Social Consciousness and Social Ideas in Children." It is referenced in Culture of Disbelief, by Stephen L. Carter, Harper Collins, 1993, page 201. Dr. Carter writes, regarding teaching values:

> *The need for teaching values is palpable. Most Americans, when they think about the need to inculcate positive values in the young, probably think about the complex of problems besetting the urban poor, especially (but not uniquely) in communities of color. But, as Ben Wildavsky has pointed out, the need to learn something about the difference between right and wrong is just as great in the mighty suburban schools that are the pride of the American education system as it is in any inner-city classroom.* Dr. Carter is citing to an article by Ben Wildavsky, "Can You Not Teach Morality in Public Schools?" published in The Responsive Community (Winter 1991-92):46.

109. See, for brief discussion of this, The Sunday New York Times Magazine, June 30, 2002, pg.14, The Ethicist column written by Randy Cohen. Franklin proposed thirteen cardinal virtues: temperance, silence, order, resolution, frugality, industry, sincerity, justice, moderation, cleanliness, tranquility, chastity and humility. See Angel in the Whirlwind, by Benson Bobrick, Simon & Schuster, 1997, at page 43.

110. See George Washington's Rules of Civility & Decent Behavior, republished in 1988 by Applewood Books, Box 365, Bedford Maine 01730. Another interesting and similar historical reference is General Stonewall Jackson's Book of Maxims, edited by James I. Robertson Jr. in 2002 and published by Cumberland House Publishing, Inc. <http://www.cumberlandhouse.com> Mr. Robertson makes a convincing case that Jackson was heavily influenced in his self improvement efforts by the letters of Lord Chesterfield to his son, including his admonishment that character "is the sure and solid foundation upon which you must both stand and rise." See Works of Lord Chesterfield, Including His Letters to His Son, …, New York: Harper & Bros., 1838. Robertson also quotes in this context Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Character is higher than intellect." Id, pg. 91.

111. The writer is grateful to Charles F. Obrecht, who has devoted much time and thought to the study and encouragement of civic standards that advance our purposes as a free and open democratic society. Mr. Obrecht's monograph of June 12, 2002 on the subject references these central religious tenets compiled by an English theologian, John Hick:

> *As a mother cares for her son, all her days, so toward all living things a man's mind should be all-embracing (Buddhism); One should never do that to another, which one regards as injurious to one's own self (Hinduism); As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them*

likewise.(Christianity); No man is a true believer unless he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself. (Islam);

What is hateful to yourself do not do to your fellow man. This is the whole of the Torah .(Judaism); The good man will regard others' gains as if they were his own and their losses in the same way. (Taoism).

112. See, as an example of contemporary works related to character ideals, <u>A Small Treatise on the Great Virtues,(The Uses of Philosophy in Everyday Life),</u> by Andre Comte-Sponville, Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt & Co., New York.

113. From the Foreword of <u>Choosing Civility</u> by Dr. P. M. Forini, a co-founder of the Civility Project, published by St. Martin's Press, New York, 2002. The author cites studies that scientifically demonstrate the relationship between good health and serenity in one's relations with others. Id, 28. In recent years, professional associations of lawyers have stressed the importance of civility in a lawyer's routine contacts with his or her peers and judges. See, for example, the Maryland State Bar Association Professionalism Course, now required of all new lawyers in Maryland. Dr. Ernest LeFever of the Ethics and Policy Center in Washington endorsed a civility program at Gilman School in Baltimore City, saying: "I'm supportive of what Gilman is doing. The harshness, the ugliness that has entered Western civilization is more pronounced than ever, and one of the major indicators is our schools." <u>The Sun</u>, Mike Klingaman, September 6, 1993.

114. In 1980 the Values Commission conducted an extensive survey and visited schools throughout the state to determine who was doing what in character education. They found that: " (1) only one set of instructional materials was in use, (2) only three counties had more than incidental reference to the teaching of values in their curriculum guides, and (3) only two boards of education had policy statements regarding the teaching of values. <u>Values Education Commission Report</u>, January 13, 1983..

115. "From 1985 to 1992, the homicide rate for 16 year olds increased 138%, while the rate among 18 year olds doubled, …" Character Counts website http://www.charactercounts.org/rskstats.htm , October 14, 1999, citing National Institute of Justice Research Preview, 1995. " Nearly 16 children a day died in 1997 as a result of a firearms homicide, suicide or unintentional shooting." Id, citing Childrens' Defense Fund, 1998.

116. A recently published Recidivism Study of the Graduates of the Drug Treatment Court (3/25/95 – 10/26/02) found that 75% of the graduates of the Drug Treatment Court had not been re-arrested. Compared with normal recidivism rates, this is an extraordinary success story.

117. Statement to the author on June 7, 2002. Judge Noel has been a judge on the Circuit Court for Baltimore City since August 19, 1983. "On an average day in 2000, , 27 children between 10 and 17 were arrested in Baltimore City – 9,809 arrests for that year. … From mid-1999 to mid-2000, 6,906 city youths were committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice, the overwhelming majority of them African-American and male – something on the order of one-fourth to one-fifth of Baltimore's youngest black men." Molly Rath<u>, The City Paper</u>, January 30, 2002. In 1950, according to Myriam Miedzian, philosopher-social worker, only 170 children under the age of 15 were arrested for serious felonies. By 1979 there was an increase of "11,000 percent." Gwinn Owens, writing in <u>The Sun</u> of October 26, 1994, citing and quoting Miedzian's book, "Boys Will Be Boys." Rabbi Joshua Martin Siegal, president of the Institute for Behavioral Health and Spirituality in Ellicott City Maryland [12014 Triadelphia Rd 443 535 9804]is consulting with the state's justice system regarding an approach to certain criminal offender populations based upon the ancient principles of *Kabbalah* which emphasizes *humility, self-worth, surrender/self-awareness,lifestyle choices, symbols/rituals, service to others and responsibility.*

118. DOJ Juvenile Justice Bulletin, June 1995.

119. The Hastings Center, founded in 1969, is widely recognized as an important independent, nonpartisan, interdisciplinary institute that has been prominent in bioethics research.

120. Report <u>of the Values Education Commission (1983)</u>. The Report also quotes early and strong endorsements of character education by the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education in the 1920s and the National Education Association in the 1950s. The former said: "A schooling that imparts knowledge or develops skills or cultivates intellectual aptitudes, fails of its object if it leaves its beneficiaries no better morally—the greatest need of our boys and girls is character." The latter: "There

must be no question whatever as to the willingness of the school to subordinate all other consideration to those which concern moral and spiritual standards."

121. From a 1994 pamphlet entitled Outcome Based Education- A Guide for Parents and the Frederick County Community.

122. The National Association of State Boards of Education has published this comment regarding evaluations of character education:

> *The evaluation of character education continues to be a challenge to states. In that regard, it is critical to remember that character education is not the cure for society's ills, and that any evaluation must measure behavior changes over a period of years. Because attitude changes are difficult to quantify, it is important to develop other measures, such as amount of time teachers spend on discipline, how often students take responsibility for their actions, number of discipline or behavior problems, or rates of absences*. NASBE: Vol.3 No.8 (Policy Update- April 1995]

123. See, for example, the issue of February 20- February 26, 1999 publishing commentaries by local celebrities and civic leaders regarding the values of persistence, inventiveness, respect for others, education, good example and community giving.

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The following appendix of news articles will illustrate some of the issues discussed in this report. They are particularized "snapshots," and are not intended for generalized conclusions.