

Setting character as your goal



When Brian Carico, our guest blogger, was introduced to Character Counts In Iowa, he quickly developed a passion for creating a school of character at Johnston Middle School.

Eleven years ago I was very fortunate to be hired for my first principal position. I knew at the time that I needed to impact educational achievement through multiple resources and the first one was student character. My father was a person that really taught me about integrity and honesty, but it was Jim Hallihan that put it together for me in the educational setting.

My first days as a principal I attended a training at Iowa State University. During one of the breaks I found myself by Jim Hallihan's office. I knew he was involved with Character Counts In Iowa, but I wasn't sure what it was. After a little over an hour in his office I was convinced that our school was going to be a school of character! Jim personified all of the great attributes that people of character demonstrate. He was also an advocate for Character Counts In Iowa in our schools and through our conversation I was convinced that character was the number one element to student achievement.

As I continue through my career of working with students, staff and the community, I believe that pursuit of good character is the cornerstone of a successful school, family and community. I use the Six Pillars as goals in my personal and professional life.

In the front lobby at Johnston Middle School we have a quote by Martin Luther King it says, "The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically... Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education." If our students leave JMS being able to do this, then we have been successful and our students will continue to develop into people of character.