HOW DO I APPROACH MY ADMINISTRATION AND DISTRICT ABOUT IMPLEMENTING CHARACTERSTRONG INTO OUR BUILDING?

Note: Most schools and districts have a process for submitting new classes and getting them approved. Familiarize yourself with this process before taking any next steps.

Recommended Talking Points:

• We live in a time period where there is a national movement around the idea of needing to teach the “Whole Child.” CharacterStrong fits into this movement of helping schools to implement a time-tested and researched-based curriculum that is intentional in design, interesting to students, and focuses on teaching students important and needed life skills.

• Science is both suggesting and proving that teaching students strong character skills is key to their success past high school. Approximately 50% of our students who do make it to college are dropping out by the end of their first year. We have begun to discover that key character traits like perseverance and grit and having a growth mindset are needed for better success. For our kids, failures or adversity are being seen as brick walls instead of opportunities for growth.

• The CharacterStrong Curriculum will strengthen your student leadership program in multiple ways. It can take a leadership program that has been seen as just a “poster making class” to one with a strong purpose and “Why” behind what they do. It can take a strong program and give it even more tools to continue to be the climate and culture change agent that it is already. It also can broaden the access of those involved with student leadership on your campus. You can create a feeder program from this class, which breaks down the stereotype that it is only for a select few who were elected or appointed and sends many more students out into your school acting and thinking differently on a regular basis.

Evidence: In over a decade of teaching this curriculum, Sumner went from two leadership classes of 50-60 students total to having eight leadership classes and over 250 students per day learning about the CharacterStrong model. Sumner’s dances and participation went way up. The quality and number of big community service projects that impacted individuals and families in real and powerful ways increased. At a recent Homecoming, Sumner got approximately 1200 students to come to our dance out of a total student population of 1400! One activity Sumner put on, called the Community Dinner near the winter holidays, went from serving 80 people with 30 student volunteers to serving over 800 people with 250 student volunteers in five short years.

- John Norlin, Sumner School District

• Everyone needs character development. Whether it be the student struggling with his behavior at school each day to a student who is your best and brightest, but doesn’t understand that it isn’t “all about them.” Everyone is in need of learning how to improve the relationships they have with their family, friends, community, and themselves.