Global Peace Roundtable: Worldwide Educational Initiatives
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Kathy Boyer, Utah, U.S. Forum, 2012-14 Southwest Region Representative

I began with the statement and questions from the letter originally sent about participating in the Peace Roundtable:

"The teaching of attributes such as caring, respect, responsibility and compassion, and the learning of skills such as critical and creative thinking, and conflict resolution are essential elements to educating global citizens to live in a culture of peace."

"What initiatives are being implemented in your country to promote a of culture of peace?"

"How have programs/initiatives impacted student achievement, behavior and overall school culture?"

I looked at the websites for each state department of education in the Southwest Region to see what was being promoted in each of the states. Most of the information I found was listed under such topics as "character education" or "bullying" or "social studies."   The words "peace initiative" or "peace curriculum" were not found. I assume that all of the other states have similar programs. These are some highlights of what I found:

Arizona- The character education department is part of the department of education. It encompasses all aspects of the influence that families, schools, and other social institution have on the positive character development. It is a learning process that enables students and adults to understand, care about and act on core ethical values such as respect, compassion, initiative, citizenship and responsibility for self and others.

California - The belief is stated that whether you are a teacher, administrator, guidance counselor, custodian, or school bus driver, you are helping to shape the character of the kids who interact with you. It is seen in the way one talks, the behaviors modeled, and the values communicated. On their website, you can access teacher guides, service leaning, a store with resources in character education, respect, responsibility, bullying, conflict resolution, and relationships. One resource was "The Daily Dilemma," with notes and discussion guides. The California Education Code defines key principles and provides resources and classroom materials.

Colorado- The Bullying Prevention and Intervention website contains resources and tools for schools and communities to utilize in order to reduce the frequency and intensity of bullying behaviors. They also have a guide to aligning social skill acquisition with Colorado academic content standards. For example, *Setting Boundaries and Anger/Impulse Management* for self-control and coping with stress; *Decision-making and Using Community Supports* to assist and support self-determination; *Empathy Development and Expectations in Relationships* to increase awareness of self and connections with others; *Verbal/Non-verbal Communication and Conflict Management* to increase the quality of interpersonal relations.

Hawaii - The department of education states that it is committed to providing a safe and enjoyable learning atmosphere for students, families and educators. As part of that commitment, they have developed initiatives to prevent bullying and harassment in schools such as "anti-bullying work." Their mission is to serve the community by developing the academic achievement, character and social-emotional well-being of students to the fullest potential.

Kansas - Their website states that school climate is affected by: student involvement, student relationships, teacher support, physical environment, conflict resolution, participation in decision-making, curriculum, counseling services, recreation alternatives, and personal stress. Kansas has Social, Emotional, Character Development (SECD) standards to provide schools a framework for integrating social-emotional learning with character development so that student will learn, practice and model essential personal habits that contribute to academic, vocational, and personal success. It is about learning to be caring and civil, to make healthy decisions, to problem solve effectively, to value excellence, to be respectful and responsible, to be good citizens and to be empathetic and ethical individuals.

Missouri - Schools are required to have a violence prevention program. The foundation of a comprehensive violence prevention program is character education that includes thinking, feeling and behavior; promotes core ethical values, provides challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners; and opportunities for moral action. Skills taught are: self-discipline, anger management, conflict resolution, problem solving and moral reasoning.

Nevada - Provides resources, programs and lesson plans that will assist in teaching students to be respectful of everyone. Provides school resources for bullying prevention programs, book resources, lesson plans, external links to school resources, social media, videos, family resources and student resources.

New Mexico - Adopted standards for excellence address the issue of character education and identifies the personal qualities of individuals that their schools and communities recognize and promote for students to be responsible, productive and caring citizens. New Mexico public school law requires that every local school district and state chartered school implement bullying prevention programs.

Oklahoma - The education department website states that every student deserves to be treated with respect and to feel safe in their learning environment. State laws address bullying: School Bullying Prevention Act, Oklahoma School Security Act, and Safe Schools and Bully Prevention Act. There are resources for bullying prevention: lesson plans, professional development, and parent education.

Texas - Permits school districts to implement character education programs for students. Programs offered under Texas Education Code must meet the following criteria: stress positive character traits as outlined in the bill; use integrated teaching strategies, and be age appropriate. Districts are required to consult with parents of students, educators, and members of the community in selecting a character education program. The Texas Education Agency is required to maintain a list of character education programs that meet the above criteria.

Utah - The state office of education website states that character is the acquisition, internalization, and application of commonly held and time-honored principles which promote optimal personal growth, establish an upright citizenry, and support the common good. Personal growth and character development are the foundation of a successful and independent lifelong learner. Students will develop personal qualities such as self-esteem, self-discipline, integrity, honesty, responsibility, sociability, and personal wellness for healthy living. There is a Utah Life Skills document which is divided into seven domains: thinking and reasoning, social and civic responsibility, personal growth and character development, aesthetics, communication, system skills, and employability.

It appears that every state department of education recognizes the importance of promoting core ethical values, teaching essential social skills, and providing a safe school environment. And each state education department believes that the development of core values impacts academic learning.