

**Russell Middle School of the Performing Arts and Sciences
Colorado Springs, Colorado
Colorado Springs School District #11**

The community of Russell Middle School sought to be the change we desired to achieve; to "live out loud" by a set of principles worthy to be carried forward to the next generation. Six years ago, stakeholder

efforts to develop character education transformed into a vision and a mission to build capacity for leadership, learning, and service to improve our school, our community, and our world through living and modeling strong core values. We wanted to know that our students were prepared, not only to be good citizens in the future, but also to grow into leaders today.



Since its beginning, the integration of our character education program has been an integral component of our universal school improvement process. In 2008, Russell was named a Colorado Trailblazer School to watch which is awarded to schools showing achievement in Academic Excellence, Developmental Responsiveness, Social Equity, and Organizational Structures and Processes. Over the past several years, we have hosted over 25 site visits where educators from across the country and world have visited our school to learn and share ideas. In becoming a lighthouse school we have actually become the change we wanted to see and have been rewarded with an opportunity to serve others in a meaningful way.

Testimonials

"Since Russell has implemented embedded character education across the curriculum, students are stepping up to the plate more on their own in regards to helping special needs students. . . . I would say that the students are kinder to one another, and that has changed the learning situation. More learning happens in a better climate."

- Marguerite Atencio, 6th Grade Social Studies

"Russell adds hope for the future to the community because the students there show good citizenship, politeness, and helpfulness. They are respectful and welcoming to visitors in the building, which I know because I often go there. . . . At Russell, students learn more than academics; they build character."

- Kevin Sherman, Local Business Owner

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