

November 5, 2014

The Geneva Declaration

Character Education for the 21st Century

Whereas 21st century challenges demand of individuals, societies and institutions the need for ethical responsibility to self and others, in recognition of humanity's interdependency; this requires expanded wisdom,

Whereas such wisdom requires deeper-than-ever development of social and emotional skills (agency, attitudes, behaviors, dispositions, mindsets, personality, temperament, values), herein referred to as "Character",

Whereas all students must develop the necessary set of knowledge, skills, Character and metacognition to be well-prepared to excel and engage in this century's challenges,

Whereas schools already play an important yet implicit role in the development of Character, and should embrace this role explicitly, particularly at a time of weakening traditional influencers,

Therefore,

We call for Character education of the entire population as a critical right and necessity, requiring:

- a new vision of Character education that identifies and anticipates needs, and reinforces the role of both performance and moral qualities, at both the intrapersonal and interpersonal levels, in society, economies, and individuals,
- improvement in teachers professional development through rethinking what and how to explicitly teach Character in order to support development of the students - inside and outside the classroom and school. This will also necessitate from students the agency to take charge of their own development.
- more inclusive assessments, at the global (such as PISA, TIMSS, etc.), academic entrance (such as SAT, ACT, etc.), local (jurisdiction-specific) and classroom-level (formative and summative) levels, and providing data and information that can be used to help improve character education at global and local levels.
- mobilization of public awareness through the media, and involvement of private and public sectors, governmental bodies, students, international organizations, foundations and others in strengthening partnerships and networks for Character education, and in improving Character education globally.

Signed,

