



## TEACHING PERFORMANCE AND MORAL CHARACTER

By BARBARA A. BRUEGGEMANN

**G**REAT LEARNING AND SUPERIOR ABILITY are of little value unless honor, truth and integrity are added to them." —Abigail Adams (first lady, 1797-1801)

Researchers Thomas Lickona and Matt Davidson are known for their two-year study titled, "Smart and Good High Schools: Integrating Excellence and Ethics for Success in School, Work, and Beyond." They write about the unique balance that must exist between performance character and moral character. Performance character is what we most typically strive for in our classrooms: strong work ethic, diligence, positive attitude and perseverance. This leads to excellence in school, work and beyond. Moral character helps us to be honest, respectful and cooperative citizens and to have ethical and fulfilled relationships.

**STEWARDSHIP, TOLERANCE, COMPASSION AND THE ABILITY TO FIND COMMON GROUND WILL LIGHT THE PATH OF THE FUTURE, AND WE ARE PREPARING OUR STUDENTS TO WALK THAT PATH.**

The challenge for schools is to teach both performance and moral character in an intentional way. At Marshall, we are preparing to launch a comprehensive character edu-

cation program that will build on the success of our existing religious and ethical studies curriculum and community service programs. As first steps to intentionally expand the program, we plan to do the following:

**1. Identify core values** — The National Forum on Character Education stresses the necessity to have a set of three to four core values. This simple list of values provides the framework for answering the question, "What is the Marshall way?"

**2. Implement peer mediation** — At both the middle and upper school levels, we will involve students in disciplinary issues. A "kids teaching kids" model is a wonderful way for students to take ownership for their school community and "live" the importance of maintaining our community's core values.

**3. Integrate service learning** — While it is important for students to volunteer at local agencies, it is also important to deepen and continue the connection in the classroom.

**4. Develop an Integrity Team** — We will create a peer-to-peer program modeled after the Richmond Rose School in Canada that identifies sixth and seventh grade students to teach character traits to other students in grades K-8.

Stewardship, tolerance, compassion and the ability to find common ground will light the path of the future, and we are preparing our students to walk that path. Our hope is that our students will be leaders in changing the world for the better. Only by intentionally including character education in our schools can we make sure students will succeed. D

**Barbara A. Bruoggomann** is the head of Marshall School.

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"The teachers at Marshall offer personalized education. My daughter is striving to be the best person she can be, because she knows someone is paying attention."

—Michelle Burtis, Marshall Parent

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