21ST Century Learning and Character Education
Education has been the passport to opportunity and prosperity.

In both developed and developing nations, young people have become increasingly reliant on social networking technologies to connect, collaborate, learn, and create, and employers have begun to seek out new skills to increase their competitiveness in a global marketplace.

Education, meanwhile, has changed much less. With few exceptions, school systems have yet to revise the way they operate to reflect current trends and technologies.
Holistic transformation

- The paradigm shift to a world of 21st century learning is rooted in a set of goals for all learners:
  - Acquire a range of skills needed to succeed in a modern, globalized world
  - Receive tailored instruction that enables them to reach their full potential
  - Connect to their communities in person and digitally, and interact with people from different cultures
  - Continue learning throughout their lives
Schools have the mission and rational obligation to provide their students with a learning environment that is conducive to their growth, development and learning; to help them master the multi-dimensional skills required of them in the 21st century; to ensure 21st century readiness for every student.

This means a dramatic change in the conservative philosophies and traditional models of the teaching-learning process. It mandates extensive change in the following areas:

- Core academic subject knowledge
- Curriculum and instruction
- Assessment
- Professional development
- Learning environments
21st century skills

- Problem solving and decision making
- Creative and critical thinking
- Collaboration, communication, and negotiation
- Intellectual curiosity and the ability to find, select, structure, and evaluate information

And the motivation to be:
- An independent self-starter who is responsible, persevering, self-regulating, reflective, self-evaluating, and self-correcting
- A lifelong learner who is flexible and able to adapt to change
21st century pedagogy

- The learner at the center: This approach caters to multiple learning styles and adapts education to reflect the learning needs of each individual.
- The teacher draws from a repertoire of strategies and skills.
- While traditional education systems fostered the obedience demanded of the manufacturing workforce, the new system must nurture creative and collaborative skills. Knowledge is available at the click of a mouse, but learning to apply it requires a teacher who can instruct, facilitate, guide, and support as needed.
Interdisciplinary and project-based work

Authenticity: Delivering learning that is authentic is another way to engage students by appealing to their existing passions and interests. It is equally important to integrate real-life experiences into lessons:

This also provides the opportunity for learning that extends beyond the classroom into the community, the wilderness, the workplace, and the virtual world.
Based on these changes, schools can update their practices and help students become literate in 21st century literacies and learning skills, which can be summarized as:

- Core subjects and themes
- Multicultural literacy
- Media and ICT (Information Communication Technology) literacy
- Emotional literacy
- Ecological literacy and Green Education
- Financial literacy
- Civic literacy
- Health literacy
- Creativity and Critical Thinking
- Communication and Collaboration
- Life and Career Skills like flexibility, adaptability, self-directed thinking, behavior and decision making
21st Century Student Outcomes and Support Systems

- Learning and Innovation Skills – 4Cs
  - Critical thinking
  - Communication
  - Collaboration
  - Creativity
- Core Subjects – 3Rs and 21st Century Themes
- Information, Media, and Technology Skills

- Standards and Assessments
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Professional Development
- Learning Environments
Core Subjects and 21st Century Themes

- Mastery of **core subjects and 21st century themes** is essential to student success. Core subjects include English, reading or language arts, world languages, arts, mathematics, economics, science, geography, history, government and civics.
- In addition, schools must promote an understanding of academic content at much higher levels by weaving **21st century interdisciplinary themes** into core subjects:
  - Global Awareness
  - Financial, Economic, Business and Entrepreneurial Literacy
  - Civic Literacy
  - Health Literacy
  - Environmental Literacy
Learning and Innovation Skills

Learning and innovation skills are what separate students who are prepared for increasingly complex life and work environments in today’s world and those who are not. They include:

- Creativity and Innovation
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Communication and Collaboration
Today, we live in a technology and media-driven environment, marked by access to an abundance of information, rapid changes in technology tools and the ability to collaborate and make individual contributions on an unprecedented scale. Effective citizens and workers must be able to exhibit a range of functional and critical thinking skills, such as:

- **Information Literacy**
- **Media Literacy**
- **ICT (Information, Communications and Technology) Literacy**
  - Multitasking — the ability to scan one’s environment and shift focus as needed to salient details.
  - Distributed Cognition — the ability to interact meaningfully with tools that expand mental capacities.
  - Collective Intelligence — the ability to pool knowledge and compare notes with others toward a common
Life and Career Skills

Today’s life and work environments require far more than thinking skills and content knowledge. The ability to navigate the complex life and work environments in the globally competitive information age requires students to pay rigorous attention to developing adequate life and career skills, such as:

- Flexibility and Adaptability
- Initiative and Self-Direction
- Social and Cross-Cultural Skills
- Productivity and Accountability
- Leadership and Responsibility
How is 21st century learning defined?

- It presents a vision for 21st century student outcomes (a blending of content knowledge, specific skills, expertise and literacies) and support systems needed. The elements represented by the rainbow are the knowledge, skills and expertise students should master to succeed in work and life in the 21st Century.
Skills to Consider

- "Digital-Age Literacy," discusses basic, scientific and technological literacies; visual and information literacies; and cultural literacy and global awareness.
- "Inventive Thinking," focuses on adaptability/ability to manage complexity; curiosity, creativity, and risk-taking; and higher-order thinking and sound reasoning.
- "Effective Communication," deals with teaming, collaboration, and interpersonal skills; personal and social responsibility; and interactive communication.
- "High Productivity," discusses the ability to prioritize, plan, and manage for results; effective use of real-world tools; and relevant, high-quality products.
- "Information Technology," identifies possible social effects with regard to information technology.
What constitutes a 21st century learning environment?

- Creates learning practices, human support and physical environments that will support the teaching and learning of 21st century skill outcomes
- Supports professional learning communities that enable educators to collaborate, share best practices, and integrate 21st century skills into classroom practice
- Enables students to learn in relevant, real world 21st century contexts (e.g., through project-based or other applied work)
- Allows equitable access to quality learning tools, technologies, and resources
- Provides 21st century architectural and interior designs for group, team, and individual learning.
- Supports expanded community and international involvement in learning, both face-to-face and online
Character Education
WHAT IS CHARACTER EDUCATION?

- It is aimed at creating schools that foster ethical, responsible, and caring young people by modeling and teaching good character through emphasis on universal values that we all share.
- It is not a "quick fix." It provides long-term solutions that address moral, ethical, and academic issues that are of growing concern about society and the safety of schools.
- It is an essential and inescapable mission of schools. The goal of character education is to help children to develop good dispositions that will enable them to flourish intellectually, personally and socially.
It involves teaching children about basic human values including honesty, kindness, generosity, courage, freedom, equality, and respect.

The goal is to raise children to become morally responsible, self-disciplined citizens.

Problem solving, decision making, and conflict resolution are important parts of developing moral character.
Is character education as important as academics?

- Absolutely.
- The social, ethical, and emotional development of young people is just as important as their academic development.
- We know that good workers, citizens, parents, and neighbors all have their roots in good character.
- Therefore, it is critical to create schools that simultaneously foster character development and promote learning.
- In fact, character education promotes academic excellence because it lays a foundation for all learning that takes place in school.
- While research is young, it is clear that character education builds classrooms where students are ready to learn and where teachers are freer to teach.
Can character education work at all grade levels?

- Yes.
- Varying "age appropriate" strategies and practices are being successfully applied to all grade levels, from teaching social and emotional skills in the earliest grades, to service learning and prejudice reduction in secondary schools.
- It is important to set a strong foundation during the earlier grades and to reinforce and build upon that foundation during the later grades.
- However, character education can be initiated at any grade level.
Character education does not amount to simply a lesson or course, a quick-fix program, or a slogan posted on the wall. It is an integral part of school life.

With intentional, thoughtful character education, schools can become communities in which virtues such as responsibility, hard work, honesty and kindness are taught, expected, celebrated and continually practiced.