



**Burlington County Special Services School District**  
**Burlington County Institute of Technology**  
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**Discover  
Your  
Potential**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Alternative School named 2017 New Jersey School of Character (NJSOC)**

During the Board of Education meeting last evening, Superintendent Dr. Christopher Nagy announced that The New Jersey Alliance for Social, Emotional and Character Development (NJASECD) named the Burlington County Alternative School (BCAS) a *2017 New Jersey School of Character (NJSOC)*. The Alternative School will maintain this status for a period of three years, through 2019. In addition, BCAS will now be placed in a pool of eligible honorees for consideration in the National Schools of Character program recognition process. Dr. Nagy commented on this prestigious milestone: "This recognition reflects the culmination of hard work, perseverance and tenacity on the part of the administration, staff and students. BCAS embraces and integrates the principles of character that promote a healthy, respectful, engaging and embracing environment across all campus programs. As a School of Character, we recognize the individuality of each student while promoting the attainment of one's own maximum potential."

This award is a welcome addition for the BCAS campus, which was recently relocated to a brand new state of the art facility designed to accommodate 150 students to meet the explosive demand for the alternative school program, which services Burlington County Districts and beyond. There will be a celebration on the campus today where the administration will recognize and thank the staff and students for the pride and honor they bestowed upon our Burlington County Special Services School District. BCAS Principal Joan Barbagiovanni reacted to receiving this award: "our staff and students have worked tirelessly to implement the Character.org Principles of Character Education. It is a well-deserved honor for staff and students to be recognized for cultivating a positive school culture and climate in which students learn, thrive, and grow."

**About Character.org**

Character.org is a nonprofit organization that works with schools, districts and organizations to develop a culture where young people thrive both academically and ethically. Character.org offers an evidence-based framework for implementing and evaluating character education through our 11 Principles of Effective Character Education. Schools of Character and Promising Practices programs utilize the 11 Principles to evaluate a school or classroom's climate and character initiatives. Those that demonstrate mastery of the 11 Principles through a rigorous application and evaluation are designated as State/National Schools of Character and Promising Practices to be honored and serve as mentors to others.

**About BCAS Application Process**

BCAS applied to become a State School of Character during the 2015-2016 school year. The application process is a challenging and lengthy one, but it allowed BCAS to evaluate current programming. In January of 2016, it was announced that BCAS was awarded the Promising Practices recognition. The staff and students at BCAS returned to school in September of 2016 determined to win this award. The administration and counseling department made necessary changes and implemented more of the practices from Character.org. We are proud to say that BCAS has been named a New Jersey State School of Character! The application is now being reviewed at the national level. The staff and students have worked very hard to achieve this honor.

The brand new BCAS facility is located at 1020 Briggs Road, Mount Laurel, NJ near Rowan College at Burlington County. For more information, please contact Laura Geltch, Program & Community Coordinator at [lgeltch@bcsssd.k12.nj.us](mailto:lgeltch@bcsssd.k12.nj.us) or call (609) 267-4226, ext. 8205.

Attachment: Photo: BCAS staff, students, & Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Christopher Nagy