

STRENGTHS AND SUPPORTS IN THE LIVES OF MIDDLESEX MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH

Based on the Results from the *Developmental Assets Profile*

April 2018

PREPARED BY



Discovering what kids need to succeed

This report is based on the results from a survey of your youth using the *Developmental Assets Profile*. It was prepared by Search Institute, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide catalytic leadership, breakthrough knowledge, and innovative resources to advance the health of children, youth, families, and communities.



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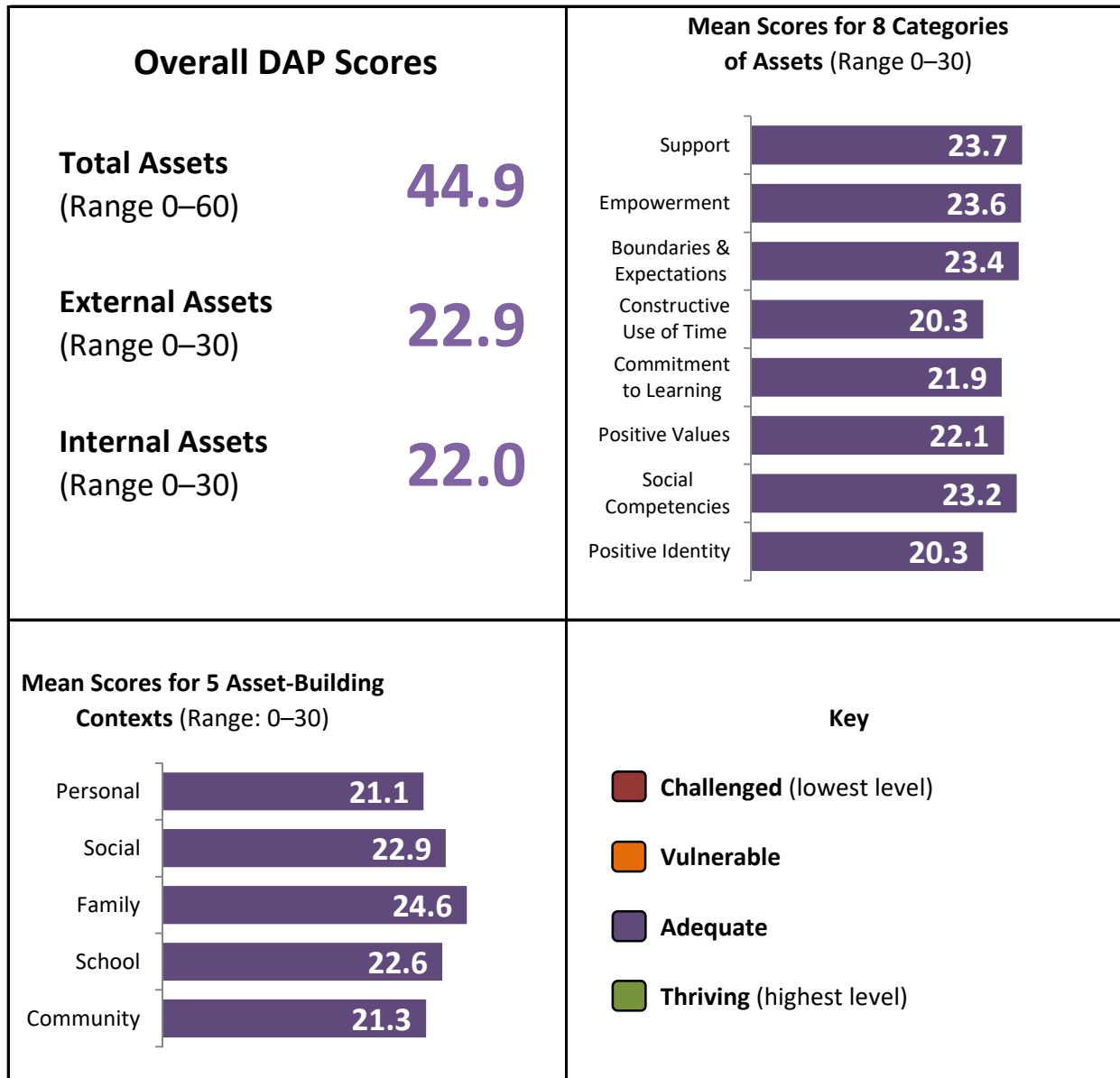
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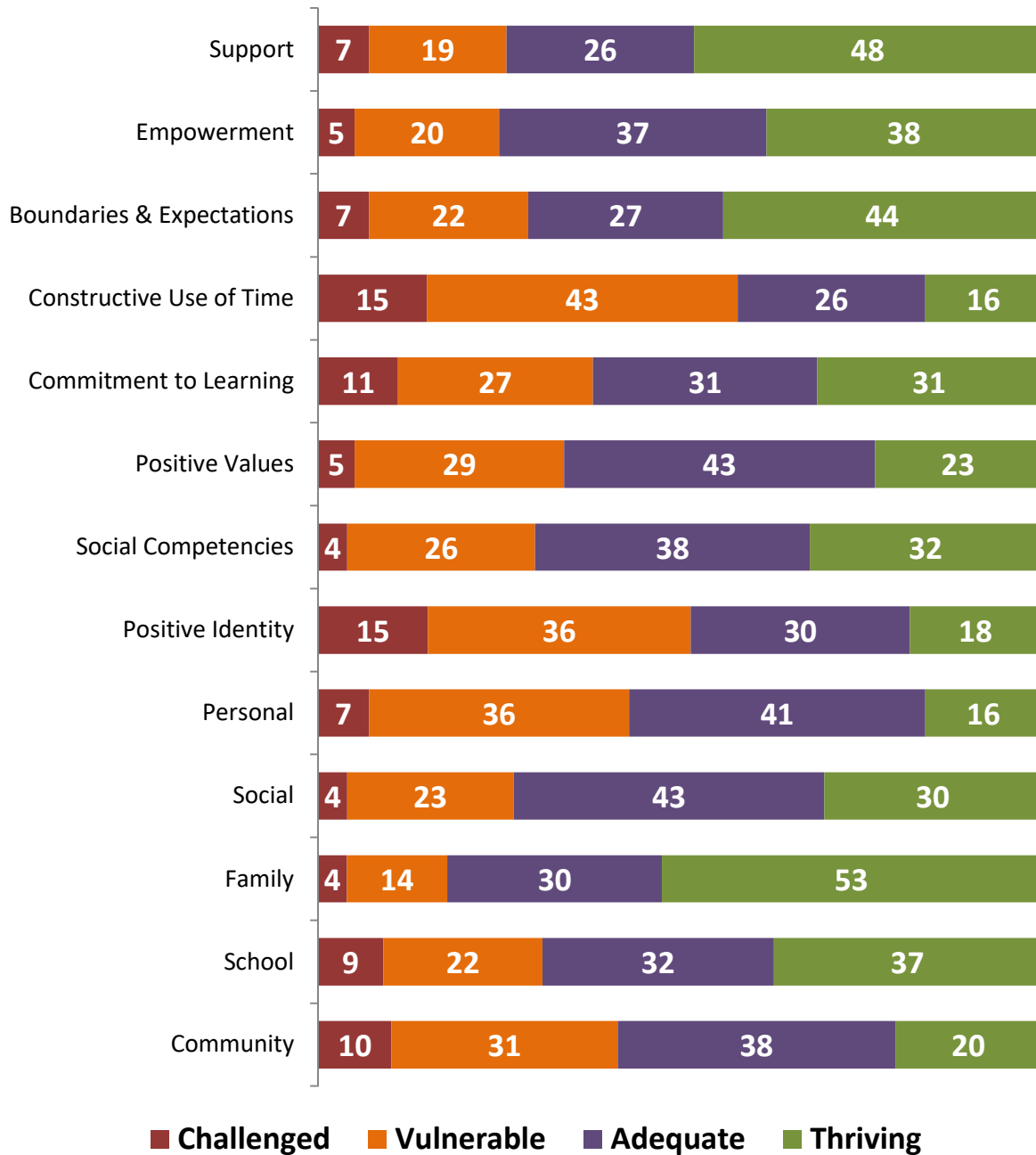
RESULTS DASHBOARD

The information in this report is based on a survey by Middlesex Middle School of 684 youth in Darien, CT in January 2018. It is based on data from Search Institute’s survey, *Developmental Assets Profile*. It focuses on understanding the strengths and supports (or “Developmental Assets”) that young people experience in their lives. Extensive research has shown that having these assets in their lives helps young people make positive life choices.



RESULTS DASHBOARD (CONTINUED)

DAP Score Distribution



A. INTRODUCTION TO THIS REPORT

Quality, meaningful data are foundational for planning, monitoring progress, and documenting results in your work with young people. Unfortunately, too often communities, schools, and other organizations have research on their youth that is limited to a few indicators (such as grades or health risk behaviors). Though vital, these data that do not shed light on the everyday experiences of youth that lead them on positive, or negative, paths to adulthood.

WHAT THIS REPORT OFFERS

This report offers unique and complementary information on your youth, emphasizing the strengths and supports they have in their everyday lives. This report:

- Describes the **strengths and supports** that young people have in their lives. These strengths and supports, known as Developmental Assets®, guide the choices young people make, including their success in school, their health, and how they contribute to community life.
- Highlights **the perspectives of young people themselves**, recognizing that young people’s perceptions of themselves and the world around them are pivotal for where they turn for help and the choices they make.
- **Puts your work in the context** of young people’s own strengths as well as the supports they have (or don’t have) in their families, schools, and communities. This broader picture sets the stage for collaboration, shared responsibility, and collective impact efforts.
- Provides a positive road map and recommendations to guide you in **proactive and focused planning and improvement** based on your results.

THE POWER OF THIS RESEARCH

This report on your youth builds on more than two decades of research with more than 4 million youth in grades 4 to 12 in the United States and around the world. This research by Minneapolis-based Search Institute has identified key Developmental Assets that are critical for positive outcomes for young people from many different backgrounds and situations.

Thousands of studies have confirmed that young people with higher levels of assets are mentally and physically healthier, safer, more caring, more productive, and more involved and contributing to society than are youth with lower levels of assets. They do better in school, and they are more prepared for college and career options after high school.¹

The survey on which this report is based, the *Developmental Assets Profile*, consists of 58 items that ask young people how often or how much they experience a variety of possible strengths in themselves, with their friends, and in their families, schools, and communities. This survey has been found to be a highly reliable and valid instrument in multiple contexts, cultures, and

¹ For more information on the Developmental Assets and the research behind this framework, see Appendix 3.

languages. For more information on how your study was conducted, see Appendix 1. For more information on the quality of the DAP, see Appendix 4.

USING THIS REPORT

When you visit a doctor, you often complete a health history that asks about your past and your current experiences and behaviors. Then the doctor looks the health history over and may take more measurements, conduct more tests, ask more questions, and look at previous records. All of this together may lead to a diagnosis and treatment plan. The doctor will likely schedule follow-up check-ups to see if you’re on track and make adjustments, if needed.

Though the analogy isn’t perfect, this report is a bit like that self-completed health history. Young people offer their perceptions of the strengths and supports in their lives. Then you—in active dialogue with young people and others—review what the youth collectively said, look at other information that is available, ask more questions, and then identify priorities for action.

This report reviews your young people’s perceptions of their own strengths and supports. It is organized as follows:

- **BREADTH.** First, this report reviews the **demographics of the young people** in your study. It’s important to review this information to see how well the survey population matches the young people you seek to reach and serve. The better the match, the more confidence you can have that the results can be applied more broadly.
- Next it presents overall findings on the **Developmental Assets** of your youth, including how different subgroups of young people are doing. The asset data are presented in two ways:
 1. Results for each category of Developmental Assets (see box below).
 2. Results for each of the five Asset-Building Contexts (see box below).
- **DEPTH.** After introducing a process for interpreting and acting on data for change, this report presents “Asset Category Reports and Plans” with key data, questions for discussion, principles and practices from research, and prompts for planning.

Categories of Developmental Assets	Asset-Building Contexts
<p><u>External Assets</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support 2. Empowerment 3. Boundaries and Expectations 4. Constructive Use of Time <p><u>Internal Assets</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Commitment to Learning 6. Positive Values 7. Social Competencies 8. Positive Identity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal 2. Social 3. Family 4. School 5. Community

CONVENE YOUR GUIDING TEAM

These data are best examined in conversation with multiple stakeholders, including youth, staff, volunteers, parenting adults, positional leaders, and others—all of who will bring different perspectives to the interpretation. If you do not already have a diverse guiding team for your planning process, convene one or more groups to work together to internalize, interpret, and then use the data for change. This process will build shared understanding and commitment to actions you ultimately take based on the findings. We have included discussion questions throughout this report to facilitate these conversations.

INTERPRETING YOUR STUDY RESULTS

This report provides detailed information from several angles. Trying to internalize everything from each of these would be overwhelming. Yet, simply focusing on a couple of interesting statistics without the broader context may inaccurately reinforce preconceptions.

Instead, we recommend that you review your results in two stages that allow you to both see the **broad** context and **deep** focus on specific issues, needs, gaps, or priorities:

BREADTH (Parts B and C of this report)

1. **Begin by examining the broad data**, such as the demographics of the sample, composite asset score, internal and external asset scores, asset category scores, or overall scores on the five asset-building contexts (all of which are explained in the report). This review gives you an overall sense of what is happening with your youth.
2. **Pay attention to both averages and distribution.** The report shows both mean (average) scores, which gives you a sense of your youth overall, and the “distribution” of scores, which shows the percentages of youth who scored low and high in each area. The distribution on different measures is shown in four levels: Challenged (lowest level), Vulnerable, Adequate, and Thriving (highest level).
3. **Examine the data for subgroups of youth**, particularly those that are most relevant to your work. Do you see surprises or meaningful differences that need further exploration?

DEPTH (Parts D and E of this report)

4. **Focus on asset categories that are of particular interest to your program or initiative.** Reflect on how the findings either align with or offer a counterpoint to the general patterns you noticed earlier. Note any patterns, surprises, or questions. Talk with others. Then make plan for short- and long-term action.

GUIDELINES FOR INTERPRETATION

You will note that this report does not have “norm” data to which to compare your youth. Though it can be interesting to compare your own results to others, Search Institute’s

experience in working with communities is that it can be distracting or counterproductive. Your youth population can be quite different from those on which national norms are based, making it difficult to interpret differences. Furthermore, the most important context is your local context, your shared priorities, and the gaps between your current realities and your targets for growth. In other words, the most relevant comparison is to your hopes, aspirations, and goals for your youth. Thus, we encourage emphasizing the local context as a comparison point, rather than focusing on comparing your data to other samples, communities, or programs.

It is also important to remember that these survey data represent just one source of information. No single source of information—no matter how valid—can tell the whole story about how your youth are doing. Thus, it is important to review these data (like all information and data) critically and in context of other information, experience, and research. If it reinforces other data points, you can have more confidence in it. If it contradicts other findings or perspectives, dig deeper to understand the reason for the differences.

As you look at the detailed tables of data, it can be tempting to over-interpret small differences between groups of youth. A difference between scores that may *look* meaningful, might not reach a level of statistical significance. That is, small differences may be due to measurement error. Small differences are less likely to be significant with smaller samples of youth.

In addition, just because a difference is statistically significant does not mean that it is programmatically meaningful. In a very large sample of youth, for example, a tiny difference between boys and girls, or middle and high school students, might be statistically significant just because the sample is big, but your common sense could tell you it has little meaning to program or policy actions. That's a judgment call that you will need to make based on your experiences as well as other information that may reinforce or counterbalance these findings.

It is quite difficult for non-specialists to interpret statistical significance. As a general rule, differences of less than 5 percent between groups are unlikely to be meaningful, whereas differences greater than 10 percent merit attention to determine if they are likely meaningful and actionable (particularly when consistent with other information).

With these general guidelines in mind, we believe you will find important results, patterns, and insights in this report that offer a fresh perspective on how young people are growing up and experiencing life in their families, schools, and communities.

This report provides basic analyses of your survey data. Search Institute can also provide customized analyses and interpretation of your study. For more information, visit www.search-institute.org or call 612-376-8955.

B. WHO YOU SURVEYED

Understanding who is included in your study is vital for appropriate interpretation and application. This information confirms whether youth who completed the survey reflect the population you seek to engage in your program or initiative.

If your sample does reflect the population you seek to engage, then you can have more confidence that the results will be broadly applicable. If your sample does not match your target population, you will need to consider these differences when interpreting the findings.

YOUR SAMPLE

You surveyed a total of 684 youth in January 2018. The specific characteristics of the youth you surveyed are shown in Table 1 on the next page. For more information on how the study was conducted, see Appendix 1.

Your youth had the opportunity to complete one of two versions of the *Developmental Assets Profile*. One is for younger youth, grades 4 to 6; the other is for youth in grades 6 to 12 (with a choice about which survey 6th graders use, based on your specific needs). Their responses are combined in the “total sample” throughout this report. The more detailed tables provide information on three different grade levels: grades 4 to 6, grades 7 and 8; and grades 9 to 12 (high school). Data on individual grade levels can be accessed through custom-generated reports within the SurveyTrax system.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In what ways does the sample in your survey reflect (or not reflect) the youth you seek to hear from as you develop your priorities and action plans?
- What characteristics of the survey sample make it particularly valuable? (For example, perhaps there is a subgroup included that you haven’t heard from before. Or perhaps it includes youth who participate regularly but don’t always speak up.)
- If your study does not include all the youth perspectives you would want to include, how might you engage those additional voices moving forward? (This might include asking them to be part of the study interpretation and planning process.)

A NOTE ON MINIMUM SAMPLE SIZES

This report will only show results for samples or sub-groups of at least 30 youth. Though this may be frustrating to program providers who want more detailed information in these groups, there are two research and ethical reasons for this practice:

1. It reduces the risk that results on particular young people will be singled out and discussed, particularly in public settings. (Discussing results of individual youth is appropriate only among professionals who are trained to appropriately use individual youth data.)
2. The results from very small samples of youth should not be applied more broadly, assuming that their perspectives are generalizable or transferrable to larger groups of youth. Their results may be true for each of them individually, but there are not enough young people in the subsample to account for measurement and sampling errors within that subsample.

1. Number and Percentage of Youth in Demographic Subgroups

		Number Surveyed	Percent of Sample
Total Sample		684	100%
Gender	Female	327	48
	Male	355	52
Grade	Grade 4	0	0
	Grade 5	0	0
	Grade 6	0	0
	Grade 7	329	48
	Grade 8	355	52
	Grade 9	0	0
	Grade 10	0	0
	Grade 11	0	0
	Grade 12	0	0
Race/Ethnicity	African American/Black	10	1
	American Indian/Native American	1	0
	Asian American	27	4
	Hispanic/Latino/Latina	13	2
	Multiracial	58	8
	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1	0
	Non-Hispanic White	555	81
	Other	15	2

See Appendix 1 for more information on how data were cleaned and how missing data have been addressed.

C. RESULTS: DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS AMONG YOUR YOUTH

The Developmental Assets framework is a research-based approach for understanding the strengths and supports that young people need in their lives to prepare for a positive, productive future. Extensive research has shown that having these assets in their lives helps young people make positive life choices, affecting their growth as they move through childhood and adolescence and into adulthood.² The higher levels of assets young people experience across the contexts of their lives, the more likely they are to:

- Do better in school;
- Be prepared for post-high school education and careers;
- Contribute more to their communities and society; and
- Avoid high-risk behaviors, such as violence, substance abuse, and sexual activity.

This report shows your asset data in four ways:

1. **Composite Assets Score** for youth and the percentage of your youth who fall into four levels based on their survey results: challenged (0 - 29 out of 60); vulnerable (30 – 41); adequate (42-51); and thriving (52-60).
2. **Internal and external assets scores**, which show the levels of supports youth have in their families, schools, and communities (external assets) and their personal strengths and competencies (internal assets).
3. Levels of the **eight categories** of Developmental Assets; and
4. Scores for each of the **five asset-building contexts**.

These multiple “angles” for looking at the strengths and supports in young people’s lives allow you to focus on areas where you can have the greatest impact in young people’s lives.

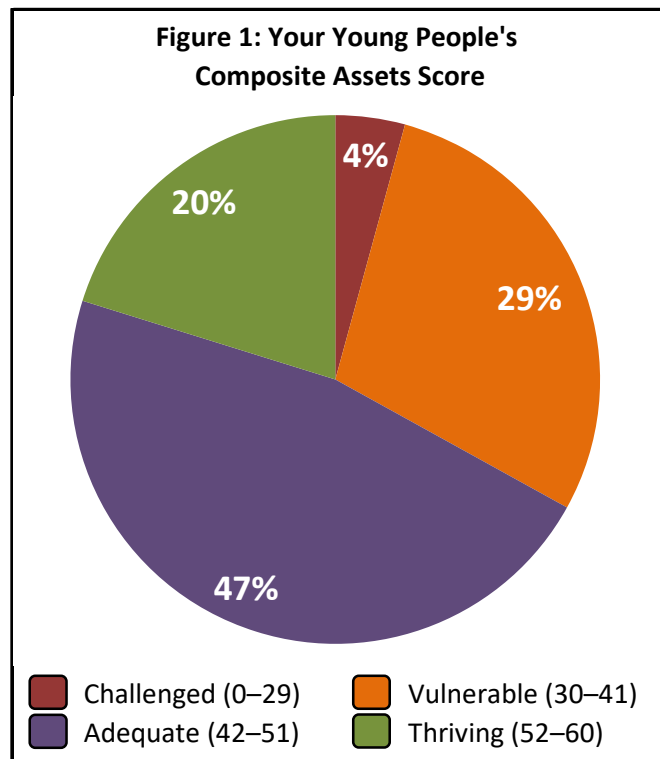
² See Appendix 3 for more on the research behind the Developmental Assets.

HOW YOUR YOUNG PEOPLE ARE DOING OVERALL: COMPOSITE ASSETS SCORE

We begin with Composite Assets Score³, which gives an overall sense of how strong the foundation of Developmental Assets is for your youth. Your survey reveals that 67% of your youth scored in the Adequate and Thriving levels combined. (Figure 1.)

On the other end of the spectrum, 4% of your youth scored in the lowest category (challenged). They would be considered be considered challenged, experiencing only a fragile foundation of assets.

These scores suggest there is considerable room to improve your young people's experience of Assets, which is not unusual. The challenge is to find the specific ways you can make a difference. The pages that follow will highlight areas where you might focus your efforts.



STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES FOR DIFFERENT YOUTH

Table 2 shows the mean Composite Assets Score for different subgroups of young people in your study. These data can point you toward particular groups of youth in the study who may be, on the whole, struggling more or thriving more. If these differences are small, they may not be meaningful or actionable, and you can focus your attention on the broader strategies. On the other hand, you may be able to identify some areas where actions could be taken.

Similarly, Table 3 shows the percentages of youth in different demographic groups who experience the four levels of assets (challenged, vulnerable, adequate, and thriving).

NOTICE AND TALK ABOUT

- What are your initial reactions to the patterns you see? Are you generally pleased or troubled? Do different people (youth, parents, etc.) have a different perspective?
- Do some subgroups of youth appear to struggle more than others, based on these results? Is that finding consistent with, or different from, other research or your experiences?

³ The Composite Assets Score combines the Internal asset score (30 points) and the External asset score (30 points). Its four levels are: 52-60=Thriving; 42-51=Adequate; 30-41=Vulnerable; and 0-29=Challenged.

2. Your Young People’s Composite Assets Score, by Selected Demographics

This table shows the mean score on Composite Assets Score for your youth (on a scale of 1 – 60).

NOTE: Providing data by subgroups allows you to focus on the results for the specific youth you are serving in a particular program. However, any differences between subgroups must be interpreted with caution. Small differences are likely not meaningful. As a rule, differences less than 5 points (on a scale of 1 to 60) are unlikely to be meaningful or actionable. Those greater than 10 points should be considered to determine whether they are consistent with other information and, therefore, may be actionable.⁴

Total Sample		44.9
Gender	Female	46.5
	Male	43.3
Grade	Grade 4	
	Grade 5	
	Grade 6	
	Grade 7	45.0
	Grade 8	44.8
	Grade 9	
	Grade 10	
	Grade 11	
Race/Ethnicity*	African American/Black	42.9
	American Indian/Native American	
	Asian American	43.0
	Hispanic/Latino/Latina	42.4
	Multiracial	43.2
	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	
	Non-Hispanic White	45.2
	Other	46.2

⁴ A more accurate way to determine whether differences are meaningful is by testing statistical significance. However, these analyses are difficult for non-specialists to interpret and, thus, have not been included in this report. They can be generated in the SurveyTrax system for those who can interpret them.

3. Overall Asset Levels, by Selected Demographics

This table shows the percentages of youth who experience different asset levels.

NOTE: Providing data by subgroups allows you to focus on the results for the specific youth you are serving in a particular program. However, any differences between subgroups must be interpreted with caution. Small differences are likely not meaningful. As a rule, differences less than 5 percent are unlikely to be meaningful or actionable. Those greater than 10 percent should be considered to determine whether they are consistent with other information and, therefore, may be actionable.

	Sample Size	Challenged (Range: 0–29)	Vulnerable (Range: 30–41)	Adequate (Range: 42–52)	Thriving (Range: 52–60)
Total Sample	684	4%	29%	47%	20%
Gender					
Female	327	3%	20%	53%	24%
Male	355	5%	37%	41%	16%
Grade					
Grade 4	0				
Grade 5	0				
Grade 6	0				
Grade 7	329	4%	28%	48%	20%
Grade 8	355	4%	30%	46%	20%
Grade 9	0				
Grade 10	0				
Grade 11	0				
Grade 12	0				
Race/Ethnicity*					
African American/Black	10	10%	30%	50%	10%
American Indian/Native American	0				
Asian American	27	4%	37%	48%	11%
Hispanic/Latino/Latina	13	0%	38%	62%	0%
Multiracial	58	5%	33%	45%	17%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0				
Non-Hispanic White	555	4%	28%	46%	21%
Other	15	7%	13%	53%	27%

SUPPORTS AND STRENGTHS: THE EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL ASSETS

The Developmental Assets framework recognizes the importance of young people having both internal strengths or character (internal assets) and opportunities and guidance from family, school, and community (external assets). Each is important, and each influences the other.

For example, young people with good social skills are more likely to have a strong web of supportive relationships. Similarly, if youth are part of effective, engaging, and safe schools, they are more likely to develop an internal commitment to learning.

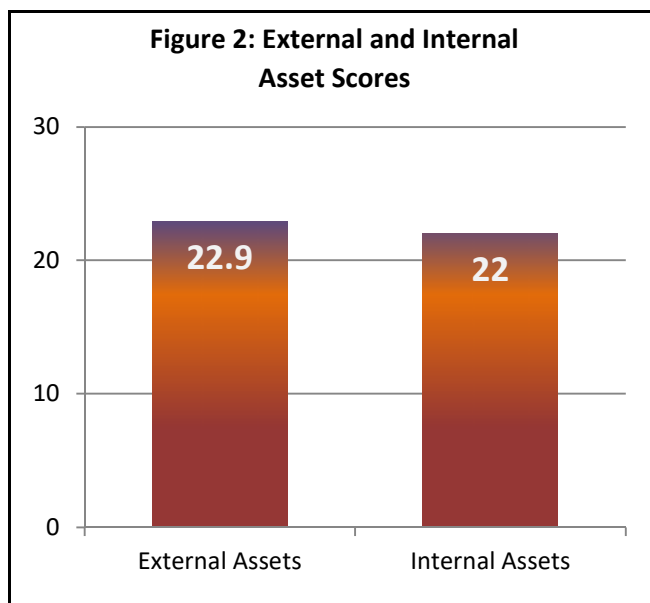


Figure 2 shows the overall scores for your youth on the external and internal asset scales (with a possible range of 0 to 30). Your External Asset score of 22.9 would be classified as adequate. Your Internal Asset score of 22 would be classified as adequate.⁵

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES FOR DIFFERENT YOUTH

Table 4 shows the levels of external and internal assets for the different subgroups of youth in your study. Typically, levels of internal assets are slightly higher than levels of external assets. In addition, females typically have higher levels of both internal and external assets.

NOTICE AND TALK ABOUT

- Think about the balance between internal and external assets. Do the study findings reflect what you would have expected? If not, what's different?
- Can you think of examples from the lives of young people you know that would either reinforce or challenge the patterns you see in the study results? How do those examples shape how you interpret the findings from this report?
- Are there some subgroups of youth where you see different patterns in looking at levels of internal and external assets? For example, do the patterns shift between younger and older youth (which often happens)? What factors may be contributing to any differences you see?
- In what ways do your programmatic efforts support or reinforce internal and external assets? What adjustments might you consider based on the study findings?

⁵ The cutoff points for each level on the external and internal asset scores are 0-14 (challenged); 15 – 20 (vulnerable); 21 – 25 (adequate); and 26 – 30 (thriving).

4. Mean Scores on Internal and External Asset Scales, by Selected Demographics

The Internal and External Assets scale scores are on a scale of 0 to 30.

NOTE: Providing data by subgroups allows you to focus on the results for the specific youth you are serving in a particular program. However, any differences between subgroups must be interpreted with caution. Small differences are likely not meaningful. As a rule, differences less than 5 percent are unlikely to be meaningful or actionable. Those greater than 10 percent should be considered to determine whether they are consistent with other information and, therefore, may be actionable.









	Sample Size	External Assets	Internal Assets
Total Sample	684	22.9	22.0
Gender			
Female	327	23.7	22.8
Male	355	22.1	21.2
Grade			
Grade 4	0		
Grade 5	0		
Grade 6	0		
Grade 7	329	22.9	22.1
Grade 8	355	22.9	21.9
Grade 9	0		
Grade 10	0		
Grade 11	0		
Grade 12	0		
Race/Ethnicity*			
African American/Black	10	21.3	21.6
American Indian/Native American	0		
Asian American	27	22.0	21.0
Hispanic/Latino/Latina	13	21.7	20.7
Multiracial	58	22.2	21.0
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0		
Non-Hispanic White	555	23.0	22.2
Other	15	23.2	23.0

EIGHT CATEGORIES OF DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

The framework of Developmental Assets is organized into eight categories, which are shown in the box on this page. These categories represent key supports (external assets) and strengths (internal assets) that young people need to have and develop in order to thrive.

The external assets are relationships and opportunities that are provided by young people’s families, schools, and communities. The internal assets are internal values, commitments, skills, and self-perceptions that young people develop within themselves that lead to self-regulation, internal motivation, and personal character.

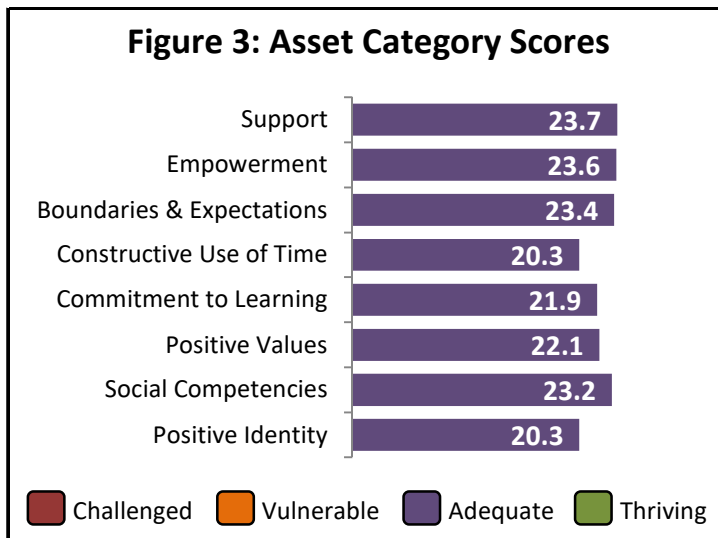
Note that the *Developmental Assets Profile* does not give a “score” for each of the 40 assets that are embedded in the framework and that are the focus of many Search Institute studies and publications. As you are planning strategies and actions to strengthen a *category* of assets, it may be useful to refer to more detailed descriptions of the *individual* assets in the categories as options for developing concrete, actionable strategies. Appendix 7 lists available resources.

THE EIGHT CATEGORIES OF DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS	
External Assets	Internal Assets
 <p>SUPPORT Young people need to be surrounded by people who love, care for, appreciate, and accept them.</p>	 <p>COMMITMENT TO LEARNING Young people need a sense of the lasting importance of learning and a belief in their own abilities.</p>
 <p>EMPOWERMENT Young people need to feel valued and valuable. This happens when youth feel safe and respected.</p>	 <p>POSITIVE VALUES Young people need to develop strong guiding values or principles to help them make healthy life choices.</p>
 <p>BOUDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS Young people need clear rules, consistent consequences for breaking rules, and encouragement to do their best.</p>	 <p>SOCIAL COMPETENCIES Young people need the skills to interact effectively with others, to make difficult decisions, and to cope with new situations.</p>
 <p>CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME Young people need opportunities—outside of school—to learn and develop new skills and interests with other youth and adults.</p>	 <p>POSITIVE IDENTITY Young people need to believe in their own self-worth and to feel that they have control over the things that happen to them.</p>

SUMMARY OF ASSET CATEGORY SCORES

This page highlights which categories of Developmental Assets, on average, are experienced most strongly and weakly by your youth overall. You can see how well your young people are doing, on average, in each asset category.

Your survey shows that particular areas of relative strength for your youth are the asset categories of Support and Empowerment. These are areas of strength to build on in your organization's policies, practices, programs, and partnerships.



On the flip side are categories that are not as strong as Positive Identity and Constructive Use of Time. These reflect areas that may need more emphasis in your organization's policies and programs in order to respond to realities young people face.

DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES IN EACH CATEGORY

Another important factor in examining young people's experiences of the eight categories of assets is to look at the distribution of responses; that is, the proportion of youth whose scores in each category fall in the ranges of challenged, vulnerable, adequate, and thriving. Table 5 shows this distribution for each of the eight categories of assets.

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES FOR DIFFERENT YOUTH

Not all young people experience these categories of assets the same way, as shown in Tables 6 and 7. These tables show the percentages of youth at each level, by demographic variables.

NOTICE AND TALK ABOUT

- Does the relative strength of the different categories reflect what you've seen with youth in your community or program? What examples have you seen that illustrate the strengths that young people have in their lives? What might you do to tap those strengths?
- Do the distributions of scores (Table 5) reflect what you see and experience among youth? Are there some categories with substantially higher percentages of youth in the "challenged" or "thriving" levels, suggesting particular strengths or difficulties?
- What about the gaps? Where do you see critical gaps that require further reflection and action? In what ways do your programs or other efforts contribute to or influence these areas of young people's lives?

5. Percentages of Challenged to Thriving Youth in the Eight Asset Categories

This table shows the percentages of youth whose score on each category of assets falls into each level. Typically, we expect to see between 5 and 15 percent scoring in the “challenged” and the “thriving” range, with most youth scoring in the “vulnerable” or “adequate” ranges. Do you see particular areas of strength (high in “thriving”) or worry (high in “challenged”) that merit additional exploration and action?

	Challenged (Range: 0–14)	Vulnerable (Range: 15–20)	Adequate (Range: 21–25)	Thriving (Range: 26–30)
External Assets				
Support	7%	19%	26%	48%
Empowerment	5%	20%	37%	38%
Boundaries & Expectations	7%	22%	27%	44%
Constructive Use of Time	15%	43%	26%	16%
Internal Assets				
Commitment to Learning	11%	27%	31%	31%
Positive Values	5%	29%	43%	23%
Social Competencies	4%	26%	38%	32%
Positive Identity	15%	36%	30%	18%

6. Mean Scores on Categories of External Assets, by Selected Demographics

This table shows the score (on a scale of 0 to 30) for each of the categories of *external* assets, by selected demographic subgroups. The cutoff points for each level on the external asset scores are 0-14 (challenged); 15 – 20 (vulnerable); 21 – 25 (adequate); and 26 – 30 (thriving).

NOTE: Providing data by subgroups allows you to focus on the results for the specific youth you are serving in a particular program. However, any differences between subgroups must be interpreted with caution. Small differences are likely not meaningful. As a rule, differences less than 3 points are unlikely to be meaningful or actionable.

	Sample Size	Support	Empowerment	Boundaries & Expectations	Constructive Use of Time
Total Sample	684	23.7	23.6	23.4	20.3
Gender					
Female	327	24.3	24.2	24.3	21.2
Male	355	23.2	23.0	22.6	19.3
Grade					
Grade 4	0				
Grade 5	0				
Grade 6	0				
Grade 7	329	24.0	23.4	23.6	20.1
Grade 8	355	23.5	23.7	23.3	20.4
Grade 9	0				
Grade 10	0				
Grade 11	0				
Grade 12	0				
Race/Ethnicity*					
African American/Black	10	22.2	22.8	22.7	16.6
American Indian/Native American	0				
Asian American	27	22.6	23.1	23.3	18.8
Hispanic/Latino/Latina	13	22.5	20.6	22.6	20.5
Multiracial	58	22.8	22.4	22.6	20.4
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0				
Non-Hispanic White	555	23.9	23.8	23.5	20.3
Other	15	23.7	23.5	24.4	21.4

7. Mean Scores on Categories of Internal Assets, Selected Demographics

This table shows the score (on a scale of 0 to 30) for each of the categories of *internal* assets, by selected demographic subgroups. The cutoff points for each level on the internal asset scores are 0-14 (challenged); 15 – 20 (vulnerable); 21 – 25 (adequate); and 26 – 30 (thriving).

NOTE: Providing data by subgroups allows you to focus on the results for the specific youth you are serving in a particular program. However, any differences between subgroups must be interpreted with caution. Small differences are likely not meaningful. As a rule, differences less than 3 points are unlikely to be meaningful or actionable.

	Sample Size	Commitment to Learning	Positive Values	Social Competencies	Positive Identity
Total Sample	684	21.9	22.1	23.2	20.3
Gender					
Female	327	23.2	22.9	24.4	20.1
Male	355	20.6	21.2	22.0	20.4
Grade					
Grade 4	0				
Grade 5	0				
Grade 6	0				
Grade 7	329	21.9	22.1	23.2	20.5
Grade 8	355	21.8	22.0	23.2	20.1
Grade 9	0				
Grade 10	0				
Grade 11	0				
Grade 12	0				
Race/Ethnicity*					
African American/Black	10	21.0	21.8	21.8	20.8
American Indian/Native American	0				
Asian American	27	23.2	21.0	22.0	17.1
Hispanic/Latino/Latina	13	21.0	20.2	21.2	19.9
Multiracial	58	21.2	21.3	22.1	18.9
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0				
Non-Hispanic White	555	21.8	22.2	23.4	20.6
Other	15	24.1	23.0	23.8	20.4

FIVE CONTEXTS FOR BUILDING DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

Young people need to experience strengths and supports across all parts of their lives, not just in one place (such as school or home). The *Developmental Assets Profile* explores young people’s perceptions of supports and strengths across five contexts, representing a healthy “ecology” of development.

Context	Description	Examples of These Assets*
Personal assets	Internal strengths that shape the character of young people, including their self-concept, values, attitudes, and capabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honesty • Restraint • Planning and decision making • A sense of purpose
Social assets	Social assets are experienced through personal relationships with others, particularly their friends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peaceful conflict resolution • Positive peer influence • Interpersonal competence • Other adult relationships
Family assets	Assets experienced in the family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family support • Positive family communication • Useful roles in the family • Family boundaries
School assets	Assets experienced in school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement motivation • School engagement • Caring school climate • School boundaries
Community assets	Assets experienced in community settings other than school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community values youth • Youth programs • Religious community • Caring neighborhood

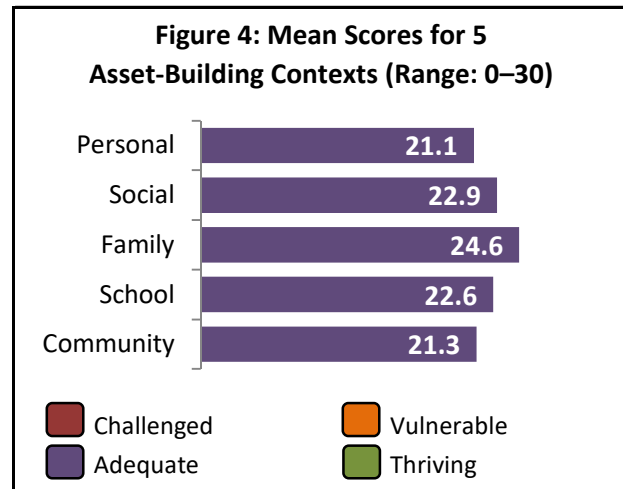
The pages that follow show the results of your study organized by these five contexts. This information is key in highlighting the important roles that the whole community plays in achieving “collective impact” in the lives of young people. It also suggests ways that youth themselves are critical shapers of their own development.

Note that these contexts reflect scores on the same items that are used to score the eight categories of Developmental Assets, so you will see consistency in the findings.

HOW YOUR YOUNG PEOPLE ARE DOING: ASSET CONTEXT SCORES

Where are young people in your study most likely to experience high levels of support and strength? As shown in Figure 4, the Family context is the strongest for youth in your study. On the other hand, the context where youth tend to experience the lowest levels of assets is the Personal context.

Your results are different from results from many studies. In many studies, the Family context has the highest score, and the Community context has the lowest score.



DISTRIBUTION OF EXPERIENCES IN EACH CONTEXT

Table 8 shows the percentages of youth who experience different levels of strength in each of the five contexts (the distribution of scores). They emphasize that all young people’s experiences are not the same in the different contexts of their lives.

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES FOR DIFFERENT YOUTH

It’s normal for young people to experience different levels of strengths in different contexts. It’s also normal for different youth to have different experiences. Table 9 shows the mean scores for each context for different subgroups of youth.

Focusing on areas where there is at least a 5% to 10% difference between groups, what patterns may be meaningful for further exploration, dialogue, and action? For example, if scores on the Community context are lower for older youth, what might be the implications for programming?

NOTICE AND TALK ABOUT

- Do the patterns across different contexts ring true to your experience and other data? If there are discrepancies, what might explain some of the differences and give a more complete picture of the experiences of these youth?
- Do the distributions of scores (Table 8) reflect the range of experiences that young people have? What might the ranges mean for how you focus your efforts?
- Where do you see particular areas of strength that can be resources for young people in your program and community? How might you celebrate and tap those resources?
- Though you may focus your efforts in just one of these contexts, what roles might you play in celebrating or boosting strengths in other contexts?

8. Percentages of Challenged to Thriving Youth in the Five Asset-Building Contexts

This table shows the percentages of youth whose score on each asset-building context falls into each level. Typically, we expect to see between 5 and 15 percent scoring in the “challenged” and the “thriving” range, with most youth scoring in the “vulnerable” or “adequate” ranges. Do you see particular areas of strength (high in “thriving”) or worry (high in “challenged”) that merit additional exploration and action?

NOTE: Providing data by subgroups allows you to focus on the results for the specific youth you are serving in a particular program. However, any differences between subgroups must be interpreted with caution. Small differences are likely not meaningful. As a rule, differences less than 3 points are unlikely to be meaningful or actionable. Those greater than five points should be examined to determine whether they are consistent with other information and, therefore, may be actionable.

	Challenged (Range: 0–14)	Vulnerable (Range: 15–20)	Adequate (Range: 21–25)	Thriving (Range: 26–30)
Personal	7%	36%	41%	16%
Social	4%	23%	43%	30%
Family	4%	14%	30%	53%
School	9%	22%	32%	37%
Community	10%	31%	38%	20%

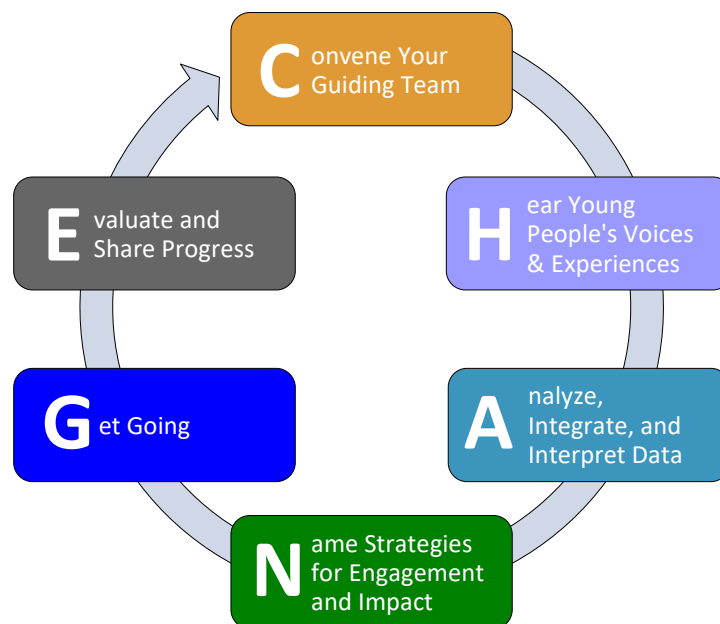
9. Mean Asset Context Scores, by Selected Demographics

	Sample Size	Personal	Social	Family	School	Community
Total Sample	684	21.1	22.9	24.6	22.6	21.3
Gender						
Female	327	21.7	23.9	25.1	23.9	22.2
Male	355	20.6	22.0	24.2	21.5	20.4
Grade						
Grade 4	0					
Grade 5	0					
Grade 6	0					
Grade 7	329	21.2	23.0	24.7	22.9	21.2
Grade 8	355	21.0	22.8	24.6	22.4	21.4
Grade 9	0					
Grade 10	0					
Grade 11	0					
Grade 12	0					
Race/Ethnicity*						
African American/Black	10	20.4	22.9	22.4	22.2	19.8
American Indian/Native American	0					
Asian American	27	19.7	21.3	23.8	23.8	20.1
Hispanic/Latino/Latina	13	19.6	21.7	23.2	21.0	20.4
Multiracial	58	20.1	22.0	24.0	21.6	20.7
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0					
Non-Hispanic White	555	21.3	23.1	24.8	22.7	21.5
Other	15	21.7	23.5	26.3	24.7	21.1

D. USING YOUR FINDINGS TO MAKE *CHANGE* HAPPEN

This study offers many data points that can inform your efforts to promote young people’s growth and development. You may have identified specific actions to take based on particular findings that you have highlighted as you reviewed all the findings. It is important, however, to take the time to work with other stakeholders to synthesize the findings, compare them to other perspectives and information, and identify specific actions you—and others—can take based on the findings to improve the lives of young people.

Through its work with communities and organizations, Search Institute has identified key steps for collecting and using data for positive CHANGE, shown here:



You have already **Convened** your team to undertake this study, and you’ve **Heard** from young people through their responses on the *Developmental Assets Profile* (and other sources). We turn now to the next three next three tasks:

- Analyzing, integrating, and interpreting data;
- Naming strategies for engagement and impact; and
- Getting going.⁶

⁶ “Evaluate”—the final E in the model—is addressed when you have collected data to show change over time, such as pre-post data, so it is not included in this report on one-time data.

This section provides an overall, step-by-step process for accomplishing these three tasks. Part E provides the Asset Category Reports and Plans that you will use with your stakeholders to focus your reflection, interpretation, and action planning around the eight categories of assets (using those that are most relevant to your efforts).

In the pages that follow, we offer a self-guided process for interpreting and applying the findings from your study. Search Institute can also provide facilitated leadership and technical assistance in interpreting and applying your findings, including working with groups of youth and adults to contextualize the survey findings in their own experiences and priorities. For more information, visit www.search-institute.org or call 612-376-8955.

ANALYZE, INTEGRATE, AND INTERPRET DATA

BREADTH

As you reviewed Part C, you gained a broad view of young people’s lives, which provides a critical context for specific strategies and actions you may identify. This involved reviewing and building a shared understanding of what the results are and what they mean. This requires contextualizing the DAP results with other data (formal or informal) and confirming the interpretation with other stakeholders, including youth and families.

DISTILL patterns and themes that rise to the top. The word “distill” means, among other things, to concentrate, extract, or separate the essential elements of something. Through all your conversations across all the areas of the study, you’ll notice important, consistent themes or patterns. As you document these patterns—and confirm them with youth and adult stakeholders—you will see specific areas that merit your attention for planning and action.

The worksheet on the next page, “Distill Patterns and Themes,” provides a tool you can use to sort out the overall patterns you see.

WORKSHEET: DISTILL PATTERNS AND THEMES

As you talk with youth and adults about the survey findings and about their experiences in your organization or program, you'll begin to notice important, consistent themes or patterns that should inform your planning and improvement efforts. Use this worksheet to capture and focus on the key themes from the data and resulting conversations.

Consistent Areas of Strength <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Both youth and adults highlight these areas.• These may be resources to tap to address gaps.	Consistent Gaps <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Both youth and adults highlight these areas.• These may be areas on which to focus attention.
Youth See Strengths; Adults See Gaps <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More exploration may be needed.	Adults See Strengths: Youth See Gaps <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More exploration may be needed.

DEPTH

Out of this reflection and conversation on the overall patterns, you begin to identify priorities for action based on your findings. Here is a high-level summary of your results.

	Asset Categories	Asset Contexts
Greatest Strengths	(23.7) Support (23.6) Empowerment (23.4) Boundaries & Expectations (23.2) Social Competencies (22.1) Positive Values (21.9) Commitment to Learning (20.3) Positive Identity	(24.6) Family (22.9) Social (22.6) School (21.3) Community
Greatest Gaps	(20.3) Constructive Use of Time	(21.1) Personal

You may review all of the findings, or you may focus on specific categories of assets that either match your existing mission and priorities or that rose to the top as needing attention in the survey results.

It may be tempting to focus only on the areas that are the greatest gaps. However, **we recommend that you pay equal attention to the strengths that are present**, since these will be resources you have that can help to meet the gaps. Thus, for example, if “support” is a relative strength and “commitment to learning” is a gap area, you might identify innovative ways to tap parents, mentors, and other caring adults to help youth with homework, encourage them to read, or motivate them to learn.

Part E consists of a two-page report and planning document for each of the eight categories of assets. The findings on the five asset-building contexts help you identify sources of strength as well as potential collaborators and stakeholders for working on assets in each of the categories.

NAME STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGEMENT AND IMPACT

Once you have a thorough and shared understanding of the study findings in light of other experiences, determining what to do is a mixture of art and science. The survey data give you a snapshot of what young people are experiencing and missing in their lives from a scientific perspective. The art comes in using those findings (and other insights) to determine what you will do in your organization based on the findings, your mission and priorities, available resources, known effective practices, and other factors.

This section gives you an opportunity to identify strategies based on your goals or priorities based on what you have learned.

GOALS OR PRIORITIES

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

ARTICULATING YOUR STRATEGIES

At this point, you need only to develop strategies and actions based on the priorities you have identified. Thus, only some of the information in the following pages about each asset category will be relevant for your planning. Find those categories that are relevant, using the report and planning documents in Part E.

GET GOING

Once you have articulated your priority strategies based on the eight categories of assets, it's time to get started with concrete actions that you have identified. Here are eight tips to keep in mind to keep your actions moving forward to have a real impact and to be sustained beyond the initial push of enthusiasm.

1. **Encourage individual actions**—As quickly as possible, identify specific ways—large and small—all stakeholders can contribute to the strategy. This increases their buy-in and commitment, and it creates a sense of forward momentum and early successes.
2. **Establish accountability for programmatic or systemic strategies**—Assign individuals to lead priority tasks forward that require planning, resource allocation, and other changes.
3. **Engage stakeholders, including youth and families**—It may be too easy to put all the responsibility for achieving goals on staff and programs. However broadening engagement and shared responsibility will pay off in the long term. When youth themselves are invited to take actions, the very step of doing so helps to build all the categories of assets.
4. **Communicate your approach, priorities, and “early wins”**—Part of your goal is to have everyone see themselves as part of the solution and working together toward a shared goal and commitment to young people's success. Acknowledging effort and telling the stories of early wins reinforces those actions and also encourages others to take actions themselves.
5. **Build capacity for success**—Do not assume that everyone already has the skills, mindset, and tools needed to be successful with the strategies. Use coaching, on-the-job training, and professional development opportunities to equip staff, volunteers, youth, families, and partners to be successful in their efforts.
6. **Address inevitable challenges**—Unintended things will happen. You will encounter barriers, resistance, and other challenges. Work together to identify, overcome, or work around the challenges. If you must change your strategies, go back to your goals to find if there are other ways to work toward them.
7. **Monitor progress and provide feedback**—You may collect new data from youth in the future using the *Developmental Assets Profile*, which will allow you to see what is or is not changing.⁷ In the meantime, check in with people about progress, monitor what they are doing, and provide feedback to keep them motivated and on track.
8. **Network with allies**—If you ask around, you'll quickly discover other people in your community or network who share your goals and are working on similar strategies. Rely on them for support, ideas, resources and encouragement—and potential collaboration.

⁷ The *Developmental Assets Profile* can be administered every three to six months, depending on your program's schedule and needs.

E. FOCUS YOUR ACTION: ASSET CATEGORY REPORTS AND PLANS

This section provides a high-level summary of your results for each category of assets, followed by a step-by-step series of questions to examine to create specific action plan to enhance the strengths and supports in young people’s lives. Here is an overview.

DASHBOARD: The high-level mean score and distribution of responses from challenged to thriving for the category of assets from your survey.

NOTICE: What do you see in the findings? This section provides an opportunity for you to reflect on the study’s findings with four focusing questions.

TALK with youth and adult stakeholders. Some of the most important insights from the study will come through conversations with various stakeholders about the findings and their meaning and implications. Take time in both structured and informal settings to discuss the findings, giving youth, youth workers, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders the opportunity to reinforce, challenge, and interpret the results from the survey as well as their own experiences related to the key themes of the study. The goal is not to come up with a single interpretation or to convince them of your perspectives, but to deepen understanding of the lived experiences of young people that are suggested by the findings.

CONNECT priorities to effective practice. A variety of research on youth development supports each of the categories of assets, including research that points toward effective principles and practices for strengthening assets in each category.⁸ As you’re planning your next steps, it is important to use this research-based information as a foundation for planning. For each asset category, we have highlighted some principles and practices to keep in mind.

SET strategies. We have provided an opportunity for you to reflect on and then document what you intend to do in the short and long term to use the study findings on each category of assets. Four questions can guide your planning:

- **THINK FORWARD:** *What is your long-term goal?* Where are you trying to go in the long-term? Focus on areas where you believe your organization can have a direct impact. Consider the strengths and resources that you can bring to bear as well as the available evidence on effective principles and practices.

Some aspects of the goal require broad buy-in, investment, and long-term commitment. These should be noted and integrated into the organization’s strategic planning process in order to align resources, build staff capacity, engage formal collaborations, and other actions needed for systemic change.

⁸ These principles and practices are extrapolated from an extensive literature review on Developmental Assets, including the research on how assets are built. For more information, see Scales & Leffert (2004) in Appendix 6.

- *ACT NOW: What do you have the power to do right now?* Yes, there are long-term, systemic issues that need to be addressed. They will likely require planning, broad buy-in, and investment. At the same time, there are specific, tangible, and important things that individuals and small groups can do intentionally that do not require major resources or planning. These “early wins” can create a sense of positive change and possibility.
- *ENGAGE: Who else needs to be involved?* Many parts of young people’s lives (including young people themselves) play roles in boosting strengths and supports. What opportunities do you have to link with others, either through informal sharing and coordination or through more formal collaboration or partnerships? How might these opportunities benefit young people and help you achieve your goals?
- *GET GOING: What is your first step? By when?* Identify individual steps you will take individually and collectively based on what you know. (Some things won’t be clear yet, but it’s important to start where you can. Otherwise, you’re likely to get caught in analysis paralysis!) Naming what each person will do, then checking in with each other gets you started. (Look back at Section D for more tips on how to get going.)



SUPPORT

Young people need to be surrounded by people who love, care for, appreciate, and accept them.

Mean Score for Your Youth (Range: 0-30)	Percent of Youth at Each Level			
	Challenged (Range: 0-14)	Vulnerable (Range: 15-20)	Adequate (Range: 21-25)	Thriving (Range: 26-30)
23.7	7%	19%	26%	48%

NOTICE: WHAT DO YOU SEE IN THE FINDINGS?

The Support category of assets was, comparatively, a strong area in your study. As you reviewed and discussed the findings, you likely came to important conclusions about their experiences of support. Note those key insights here as part of the context to consider as you discuss the findings with youth and adult stakeholders.

What study findings about Support assets confirmed your experiences?	What study findings about Support assets challenged your perceptions?
What study findings about Support assets do you question because they contradict other data?	What key takeaways do you have about Support assets from your study?

TALK WITH YOUTH AND ADULT STAKEHOLDERS

In addition to talking about the “notice” questions in relation to specific findings in your study, below are some recommended discussion questions about Support assets to use with youth and adult stakeholders to deepen your understanding of their perspectives.

YOUTH

1. What are places in your life where you feel a lot of support and care?
2. How do you know that people really care about you and support you? What are things they do?
3. What happens in our organization that make you feel supported or not supported? Give examples.

ADULTS (staff, volunteers, parents/caregivers)

1. What do we do well in our programs and activities to connect with participants and show that we care about them?
2. Where do you see gaps? What gets in the way?
3. How do or could we connect with other people and places that work to support youth, including families? How might that strengthen our work?

SUPPORT (CONTINUED)

CONNECT PRIORITIES TO EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Here are some principles and practices from research to keep in mind as you seek to increase young people’s experiences of support.

- Create an environment of open, honest, and respectful communication. This increases the likelihood that young people will feel supported, accepted, and open to sharing their own perspectives, experiences, and opinions.
- Intentionally express care to young people whom may be more difficult to connect with. Some young people naturally attract a lot of supports from adults because of their personalities; others can get lost because they are quiet or have their guard up.
- Adjust the focus of supportive relationships to respond to young people’s interests, needs, priorities, and development, rather than on the adults’ goals or priorities.
- Learn about, reinforce, and supplement young people’s other sources of support. Do not create competition between different sources of support (such as a parent or a teacher or a youth worker), since having multiple supports is ideal for young people.

SET STRATEGIES

THINK FORWARD: What is your long-term goal in this category?	ACT NOW: What do you have the power to do right now?
ENGAGE: Who else needs to be involved?	GET GOING: What is your first step? By when?



EMPOWERMENT

Young people need to feel valued and valuable. This happens when youth feel safe and respected.

Mean Score for Your Youth (Range: 0-30)	Percent of Youth at Each Level			
	Challenged (Range: 0-14)	Vulnerable (Range: 15-20)	Adequate (Range: 21-25)	Thriving (Range: 26-30)
23.6	5%	20%	37%	38%

NOTICE: WHAT DO YOU SEE IN THE FINDINGS?

The Empowerment category of assets was, comparatively a strong area in your study. As you reviewed and discussed the findings, you likely came to important conclusions about their experiences of empowerment. Note those key insights here as part of the context to consider as you discuss the findings with youth and adult stakeholders.

What study findings about Empowerment assets confirmed your experiences?	What study findings about Empowerment assets challenged your perceptions?
What study findings about Empowerment assets do you question because they contradict other data?	What key takeaways do you have about Empowerment assets from your study?

TALK WITH YOUTH AND ADULT STAKEHOLDERS

In addition to talking about the “notice” questions in relation to specific findings in your study, below are some recommended discussion questions about Empowerment assets to use with youth and adult stakeholders to deepen your understanding of their perspectives.

YOUTH

1. What makes you feel safe and valued in your home, neighborhood, school, and this organization/program?
2. In what areas of this organization or program do you feel like you have a voice and can influence or make decisions?
3. If you could help to change one thing in our program or community, what would you want to do?

ADULTS (staff, volunteers, parents/caregivers)

1. When young people participate, how do we show them that we value them?
2. How does our organization involve young people in decision-making and leadership? What other opportunities might there be?
3. What concerns, if any, do you have about young people’s physical and emotional safety in this program or neighborhood? How do or could we be more intentional in addressing them?

EMPOWERMENT (CONTINUED)

CONNECT PRIORITIES TO EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Here are some principles and practices from research to keep in mind as you seek to empower young people.

- The foundational of empowerment is being in environments and relationships where young people feel valued and safe. They are most likely to feel valued when they not only have a voice or say in what happens, but also when they are active decision makers and leaders.
- Empowering youth does not mean abdicating all authority, guidance, control, responsibility, or power to young people. Rather, empowerment is most effective when adults and organizations provide opportunities for young people to have a voice, contribute, and lead in a way that is aligned with their levels of maturity, skills, interests, and experience.
- Young people’s perceptions play an important role beyond the objective reality of their *safety*. If they don’t *feel* physically, emotionally, or socially safe, they are much less likely to feel valued and valuable.
- When examining whether an environment is empowering, it is important to consider whether young people from all backgrounds, genders, sexual orientations, disabilities, ages, and other individual differences feel valued and safe. Just because the leaders or dominant groups of youth feel empowered does not ensure that all young people do.

SET STRATEGIES

What is your long-term goal in this category?	What do you have the power to do right now?
Who else needs to be involved?	What is your first step? By when?



BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Young people need clear rules, consistent consequences for breaking rules, and encouragement to do their best.

Mean Score for Your Youth (Range: 0-30)	Percent of Youth at Each Level			
	Challenged (Range: 0-14)	Vulnerable (Range: 15-20)	Adequate (Range: 21-25)	Thriving (Range: 26-30)
23.4	7%	22%	27%	44%

NOTICE: WHAT DO YOU SEE IN THE FINDINGS?

The Boundaries and Expectations category of assets was, comparatively a moderate area in your study. As you reviewed and discussed the findings, you likely came to important conclusions about their experiences of boundaries and expectations. Note those key insights here as part of the context to consider as you discuss the findings with youth and adult stakeholders.

What study findings about Boundaries and Expectations assets confirmed your experiences?	What study findings about Boundaries and Expectations assets challenged your perceptions?
What study findings about Boundaries and Expectations assets do you question because they contradict other data?	What key takeaways do you have about Boundaries and Expectations assets from your study?

TALK WITH YOUTH AND ADULT STAKEHOLDERS

In addition to talking about the “notice” questions in relation to specific findings in your study, below are some recommended discussion questions about Boundaries and Expectations assets to use with youth and adult stakeholders to deepen your understanding of their perspectives.

YOUTH

1. Are the rules and expectations for what you can and cannot do at this organization clear and fair? Explain.
2. Are the rules or boundaries that you are expected to follow consistent between your home, your school, and this organization? Where do they clash?
3. What are ways that people challenge you to be your best that motivate you to work hard? What things do people do that deflate you or make you want to quit?

ADULTS (staff, volunteers, parents/caregivers)

1. How comfortable are you in setting and enforcing boundaries with youth? How do you balance this with showing care?
2. What are the most important boundaries that you believe need to be in place for young people in your neighborhood? How well are these understood or enforced?
3. In what ways are the boundaries and expectations that youth experience consistent or inconsistent in different parts of their lives (family, school, community)?

BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS (CONTINUED)

CONNECT PRIORITIES TO EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Here are some principles and practices from research to keep in mind as you seek to establish, clarify, or reinforce boundaries and expectations for young people.

- The Boundaries and Expectations assets address both appropriate *limits* on what young people do (and should not do) and *challenges* that stretch them to apply effort and excel.
- Boundaries and expectations are established by making them *explicit* (clearly saying what they are), *modeling* them (by adults and peers) in ways that influence young people’s own actions, and *reinforcing* them (there are consequences for disregarding rules and limits).
- Boundaries and expectations are most effective when they are balanced with high levels of support (warmth) and empowerment. By themselves, they can become authoritarian and counter-productive.
- Boundaries and expectations should be adjusted as children and youth mature, giving them more responsibility and autonomy, thus developing internal self-regulation and initiative. As they develop, young people can be given more responsibility and autonomy by having greater input to what your organization’s boundaries and expectations are.
- Boundaries and expectations may also need to be adjusted, depending on the dynamics of a neighborhood or family. Often, tighter boundaries are necessary when a neighborhood is unstable or unsafe for young people, or when young people are in chaotic family situations.
- Boundaries and expectations are most effective when they are consistent and aligned across different parts of young people’s lives: family, school, and community.

SET STRATEGIES

What is your long-term goal in this category?	What do you have the power to do right now?
Who else needs to be involved?	What is your first step? By when?



CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME

Young people need opportunities—outside of school—to learn and develop new skills and interests with other youth and adults.

Mean Score for Your Youth (Range: 0-30)	Percent of Youth at Each Level			
	Challenged (Range: 0-14)	Vulnerable (Range: 15-20)	Adequate (Range: 21-25)	Thriving (Range: 26-30)
20.3	15%	43%	26%	16%

NOTICE: WHAT DO YOU SEE IN THE FINDINGS?

The Constructive Use of Time category of assets was, comparatively a weak area in your study. As you reviewed and discussed the findings, you likely came to important conclusions about their participation in constructive use of time activities or organizations. Note those key insights here as part of the context to consider as you discuss the findings with youth and adult stakeholders.

What study findings about Constructive Use of Time assets confirmed your experiences?	What study findings about Constructive Use of Time assets challenged your perceptions?
What study findings about Constructive Use of Time assets do you question because they contradict other data?	What key takeaways do you have about Constructive Use of Time assets from your study?

TALK WITH YOUTH AND ADULT STAKEHOLDERS

In addition to talking about the “notice” questions in relation to specific findings in your study, below are some recommended discussion questions about Constructive Use of Time assets to use with youth and adult stakeholders to deepen your understanding of their perspectives.

YOUTH

1. Where do you spend time outside of home and school that you really feel like you are “at home”? What do you like there?
2. Are there activities or programs that you’re really interested in that are not available to you in your community?
3. What young people in your community are not really involved in any programs or organizations outside of school? What keeps them from being involved?

ADULTS (staff, volunteers, parents/caregivers)

1. How well do you think the available activities available for youth match their interests? Where do you see gaps?
2. What barriers do you face in offering quality program to diverse youth?
3. How do the opportunities you offer complement or duplicate other available options? How might alignment and collaboration with other organizations benefit youth in your community?

CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME (CONTINUED)

CONNECT PRIORITIES TO EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Research shows that out-of-school time opportunities are most likely to attract, retain, and impact young people when they:

- Offer a variety of opportunities that align with young people’s needs, interests, and backgrounds. These may include academic, artistic, athletic, social, entrepreneurial, and technical (e.g., computers) opportunities.
- Provide supportive, caring, and respectful relationships with both adults and peers.
- Set clear expectations and challenge young people to grow and learn.
- Give young people opportunities to help make decisions and exert leadership.
- Have program leaders (youth workers) who are committed to the work, believe in and care about young people, and are willing to advocate on behalf of and with youth.
- Work with other programs, organizations, schools, and families to align efforts.
- Are affordable and easy to access and use.

SET STRATEGIES

What is your long-term goal in this category?	What do you have the power to do right now?
Who else needs to be involved?	What is your first step? By when?



COMMITMENT TO LEARNING

Young people need a sense of the lasting importance of learning and a belief in their own abilities.

Mean Score for Your Youth (Range: 0-30)	Percent of Youth at Each Level			
	Challenged (Range: 0-14)	Vulnerable (Range: 15-20)	Adequate (Range: 21-25)	Thriving (Range: 26-30)
21.9	11%	27%	31%	31%

NOTICE: WHAT DO YOU SEE IN THE FINDINGS?

The Commitment to Learning category of assets was, comparatively a moderate area in your study. As you reviewed and discussed the findings, you likely came to important conclusions about their commitment of learning. Note those key insights here as part of the context to consider as you discuss the findings with youth and adult stakeholders.

What study findings about Commitment to Learning assets confirmed your experiences?	What study findings about Commitment to Learning assets challenged your perceptions?
What study findings about Commitment to Learning assets do you question because they contradict other data?	What key takeaways do you have about Commitment to Learning assets from your study?

TALK WITH YOUTH AND ADULT STAKEHOLDERS

In addition to talking about the “notice” questions in relation to specific findings in your study, below are some recommended discussion questions about Commitment to Learning assets to use with youth and adult stakeholders to deepen your understanding of their perspectives.

YOUTH

1. What are things that you are interested in and would really like to learn more about? How do you think you might learn more?
2. What are times when learning is really interesting to you? Boring? What makes those times different?
3. What is most important for learning: being smart or working hard? When have you seen or experienced the difference?
4. In what ways do adults reinforce the importance of learning? What do they do that makes it seem less important?

ADULTS (staff, volunteers, parents/caregivers)

1. When have you seen young people really get engaged and come to life when learning? What made that happen?
2. What do we do in our programs that complements or reinforces what young people are learning in school?
3. How do our programs stimulate curiosity and learning among participants? How might we undermine these goals?
4. What opportunities do you see to collaborate with others to enhance young people’s commitment to learning?

COMMITMENT TO LEARNING (CONTINUED)

CONNECT PRIORITIES TO EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Here are some principles and practices from research to keep in mind as you seek to strengthen young people’s commitment to learning.

- Commitment to learning focuses young people’s motivations, goals, beliefs about themselves, values, habits, and skills for learning, both in and out of school. Families, peers, schools, community programs, and other influences shape these educational attitudes, values, skills, and commitments.
- Learning engagement is stronger (both inside and outside of school) when students like learning itself (with a focus on understanding and mastery), rather than being motivated just to get good grades or other rewards (which tend to lead to superficial study techniques, such as memorization).
- Parents and other caring adults play important roles in young people’s commitment to learning. Commitment is more likely when adults show interest in what the young person is learning, offer encouragement, have expectations for success as well as supportive and corrective guidance for getting better, and when they communicate with young people in growth-enhancing ways (emphasizing the importance of effort, rather than just “being smart,” or reminding young people that mistakes are inevitable as one strives to become more skillful in any pursuit).
- Though schools certainly play central roles in nurturing a commitment to learning, all of young people’s experiences in their community can reinforce or undermine their commitment to learning. Community members and program leaders can reinforce the importance of education, and they can also stimulate learning in areas that may be outside the standard school curriculum but that tap young people’s interests and talents.

SET STRATEGIES

What is your long-term goal in this category?	What do you have the power to do right now?
Who else needs to be involved?	What is your first step? By when?



POSITIVE VALUES

Young people need to develop strong guiding values or principles to help them make healthy life choices.

Mean Score for Your Youth (Range: 0-30)	Percent of Youth at Each Level			
	Challenged (Range: 0-14)	Vulnerable (Range: 15-20)	Adequate (Range: 21-25)	Thriving (Range: 26-30)
22.1	5%	29%	43%	23%

NOTICE: WHAT DO YOU SEE IN THE FINDINGS?

The Positive Values category of assets was, comparatively a moderate area in your study. As you reviewed and discussed the findings, you likely came to important conclusions about their Positive Values. Note those key insights here as part of the context to consider as you discuss the findings with youth and adult stakeholders.

What study findings about Positive Values assets confirmed your experiences?	What study findings about Positive Values assets challenged your perceptions?
What study findings about Positive Values assets do you question because they contradict other data?	What key takeaways do you have about Positive Values assets from your study?

TALK WITH YOUTH AND ADULT STAKEHOLDERS

In addition to talking about the “notice” questions in relation to specific findings in your study, below are some recommended discussion questions about Positive Values assets to use with youth and adult stakeholders to deepen your understanding of their perspectives.

YOUTH

1. What values are most important for you to follow? Do you believe that other young people share those values?
2. What makes it hard to live out the values that you believe are important? What makes it easier?
3. Do people in different parts of your life (family, peers, school, community) all encourage you to live by similar values? Where are they consistent or inconsistent?

ADULTS (staff, volunteers, parents/caregivers)

1. What values do you see young people showing in what they say and do?
2. What makes it hard or difficult to deal with positive values in your organization? What might make it easier?
3. What values do you seek to model for the young people you serve or in your family?
4. What expectations does this organization or program have for young people in terms of their values? How are those values expectations communicated or reinforced?

POSITIVE VALUES (CONTINUED)

CONNECT PRIORITIES TO EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Here are some principles and practices from research to keep in mind as you seek to cultivate positive values in young people.

- Families play a particularly important role in the development of positive values, beginning at very young ages. Thus, working with families is an important key to nurturing values.
- Young people are most likely to internalize the values that they have also experienced themselves. For example, young people are more likely to internalize the value of caring for others when they have experienced consistent warmth and care.
- Values are internalized through experiences, modeling, and critical reflection on personal beliefs and actions, more than they are shaped through formal curriculum on specific values (such as lessons on honesty).
- Young people are more likely to internalize positive values when they have opportunities to talk about and debate real-world issues in their own lives, not hypothetical situations. Such conversations are more likely when they have strong relationships with caring adults.
- Involving young people in service, leadership, and community action can be a powerful way to nurture positive values, particularly when young people are actively involved in designing and leading the experiences and when they have opportunities to participate in structured reflection or debriefing on their experiences.
- Young people’s values are strengthened when behaviors that reflect those values are noticed and reinforced (e.g., acknowledging an act of caring or honesty). Telling young people that they are honest or show restraint can become a self-fulfilling prophecy—just as telling them that they are lazy or dishonest can reinforce those negative values.

SET STRATEGIES

What is your long-term goal in this category?	What do you have the power to do right now?
Who else needs to be involved?	What is your first step? By when?



SOCIAL COMPETENCIES

Young people need the skills to interact effectively with others, to make difficult decisions, and to cope with new situations.

Mean Score for Your Youth (Range: 0-30)	Percent of Youth at Each Level			
	Challenged (Range: 0-14)	Vulnerable (Range: 15-20)	Adequate (Range: 21-25)	Thriving (Range: 26-30)
23.2	4%	26%	38%	32%

NOTICE: WHAT DO YOU SEE IN THE FINDINGS?

The Social Competencies category of assets was, comparatively a moderate area in your study. As you reviewed and discussed the findings, you likely came to important conclusions about young people’s social competencies. Note those key insights here as part of the context to consider as you discuss the findings with youth and adult stakeholders.

What study findings about Social Competencies assets confirmed your experiences?	What study findings about Social Competencies assets challenged your perceptions?
What study findings about Social Competencies assets do you question because they contradict other data?	What key takeaways do you have about Social Competencies assets from your study?

TALK WITH YOUTH AND ADULT STAKEHOLDERS

In addition to talking about the “notice” questions in relation to specific findings in your study, below are some recommended discussion questions about Social Competencies assets to use with youth and adult stakeholders to deepen your understanding of their perspectives.

YOUTH

1. What kinds of programs or activities have helped you the most in learning to get along with others and to develop skills that will help you later in life?
2. How does this organization or program encourage or discourage you from getting to know and work through disagreements with people who are different from you?
3. What social skills would be most valuable for you to learn?

ADULTS (staff, volunteers, parents/caregivers)

1. What social skills and abilities do you see in the young people you know? What gaps do you see?
2. What does this organization or program do that is most effective in building social competencies, such as decision-making skills or resolving conflict peacefully?
3. Are some youth being left out because of their personality or background? How might they be included?

SOCIAL COMPETENCIES (CONTINUED)

CONNECT PRIORITIES TO EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Here are some principles and practices from research to keep in mind as you develop young people’s social competencies.

- Social competencies are built by enhancing young people’s knowledge, their sense of available options, underlying motivations, and understanding of consequences, both positive and negative.
- Youth can cultivate social competencies through opportunities to practice these skills and attitudes through real-life experiences, role-playing, or simulations.
- Social competencies develop through relationships with people from different backgrounds, cultures and worldviews, personalities, interests, age groups, and other diversity. Giving opportunities for these interactions, paired with reflection, can solidify these competencies.
- Building social competencies among older children and youth builds on foundations that are ideally laid in early childhood, particularly in families. If that foundation is not strong, nurturing caring relationships and social support can set the stage for building these competencies throughout childhood and adolescence.
- Young people’s social competencies are shaped as they navigate or adapt to the specific challenges or opportunities they face in their neighborhoods, families, or schools. A key strategy is to work with them to ensure that their strategies are healthy and constructive.

SET STRATEGIES

What is your long-term goal in this category?	What do you have the power to do right now?
Who else needs to be involved?	What is your first step? By when?



POSITIVE IDENTITY

Young people need to believe in their own self-worth and to feel that they have control over the things that happen to them.

Mean Score for Your Youth (Range: 0-30)	Percent of Youth at Each Level			
	Challenged (Range: 0-14)	Vulnerable (Range: 15-20)	Adequate (Range: 21-25)	Thriving (Range: 26-30)
20.3	15%	36%	30%	18%

NOTICE: WHAT DO YOU SEE IN THE FINDINGS?

The Positive Identity category of assets was, comparatively a weak area in your study. As you reviewed and discussed the findings, you likely came to important conclusions about young people’s sense of positive identity. Note those key insights here as part of the context to consider as you discuss the findings with youth and adult stakeholders.

What study findings about Positive Identity assets confirmed your experiences?	What study findings about Positive Identity assets challenged your perceptions?
What study findings about Positive Identity assets do you question because they contradict other data?	What key takeaways do you have about Positive Identity assets from your study?

TALK WITH YOUTH AND ADULT STAKEHOLDERS

In addition to talking about the “notice” questions in relation to specific findings in your study, below are some recommended discussion questions about Positive Identity assets to use with youth and adult stakeholders to deepen your understanding of their perspectives.

YOUTH

1. What are people and places that let you know that you are valued and loved for who you are?
2. How do you know when encouragement from a friend or adult is genuine?
3. How do people let you know that you are capable? What might they do that makes you feel like you don’t have much influence over things?
4. What gives you hope for your own future? What worries you?

ADULTS (staff, volunteers, parents/caregivers)

1. How do you show young people that they are valued for who they are, particularly if they feel left out of the mainstream?
2. What explicit messages do you give and steps do you take to show young people from a wide range of backgrounds that your organizations things they are capable and competent?
3. What opportunities do young people have to talk about their own future, including their hopes and plans beyond high school?

POSITIVE IDENTITY (CONTINUED)

CONNECT PRIORITIES TO EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Here are some principles and practices from research to keep in mind as you seek to nurture a positive identity in young people.

- A healthy positive identity is more likely to develop when people around youth emphasize the inherent worth and value of each young person, rather than focusing on external factors, such as looks, athletic ability, intelligence, or creativity.
- Building strong, positive relationships is the foundation of a positive identity.
- Feedback to young people is most valuable in shaping their self-concept when it is specific and from someone who they respect in the area. Thus, feedback on their contributions to a basketball game tends to be more valuable when a coach identifies the specific things they did that merited commendation (for example, not saying “good job out there,” but instead, “you did a great job keeping your hands up on defense”).
- Some of the most consistent ways of strengthening a positive identity involve empowering youth through leadership, service, and other ways of giving voice to who they are.
- Giving young people tasks that they will be genuinely successful in completing can help to rebuild a sense of competence for those whose self-concept has been damaged by previous, repeated failures or being belittled or shamed by others.
- Some young people whose identity may not fit social norms (such as gay, lesbian, or gender-variant youth, or youth with a minority cultural or religious identity) often need extra support to help them form a positive identity when it is not valued or recognized by community norms or expectations.

SET STRATEGIES

What is your long-term goal in this category?	What do you have the power to do right now?
Who else needs to be involved?	What is your first step? By when?

F. APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: METHODOLOGY: HOW THIS STUDY WAS CONDUCTED

The Search Institute survey, *Developmental Assets Profile*, was used for this study through the online data system KidTrax. This survey has been used in hundreds of schools and organizations across the United States and around the world.

Two versions of the survey were used. One version (known as DAP-Preteen) is designed for young people in grades 4 through 6; the other (DAP-Teen) is for youth in grades 6 through 12. (Sixth graders can complete either survey, based on what is most logical for your study.) The two versions measure the same constructs; the version for younger youth has simplified language and is more developmentally appropriate. Results from both surveys are combined in the total sample scores in this report.

The survey was administered in January, 2018 to young people in 7 and 8 at Middlesex Middle School. Standardized administration procedures were provided to staff that administered the survey to enhance the quality of the data. To ensure complete student anonymity, no names or identification numbers were used.

To create the final dataset on which this report is based, several checks were made on individual survey responses. Surveys with responses missing from six or more items as well as those with obvious patterns to suggest the survey was not taken seriously (such as marking all items identically, alternating responses from one extreme to the other, or an ordered sequence of responses) have been automatically removed.

For this report, 22 surveys were eliminated due to inconsistent responses, missing data on 6 or more items, or grades other than those intended to be surveyed. The number of surveys discarded represents 3 percent of the total number of surveys received at Search Institute. Typically between five and eight percent of surveys are discarded for these reasons. If, for any reason, the percentage of discarded surveys is greater than 10 percent, caution should be used in interpreting the results, as some bias may be present.

Another factor affecting the quality of the data is the degree to which the surveyed youth represent the youth in the participating organization or school. If a random sample was used, the sample needs to be large enough to appropriately represent the student population. Studies intended to assess all youth, but that cannot randomly sample youth, should ideally obtain data from at least 80 percent of the youth. Neither method produces perfect results, but both can provide quality information about your youth.

In this report, percentages are generally reported by total group, by gender, and by grade levels, by race/ethnicity, and by level of program participation. To protect anonymity, if data are available from fewer than 30 youth in any subgroup, responses are included in the total scores, but are not reported separately.

APPENDIX 2: RESPONSES ON ALL DAP SURVEY ITEMS IN YOUR STUDY

Below are the percentages that show how youth in your study responded to each survey item in the *Developmental Assets Profile*. These items are all used to create the measures of the asset categories and asset-building contexts that are the focus of this report. Results on individual items can be useful in exploring what aspects of each category or context tended to be stronger or weaker; however, it's important to remember that the total scales are more reliable in understanding the patterns of young people's lives.

<i>Developmental Assets Profile</i> Items	Not at all or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
1. I tell other people what I believe in.	3%	27%	46%	23%
2. I feel in control of my life and future.	4%	22%	43%	31%
3. I feel good about myself.	3%	20%	41%	36%
4. I say no to things that are dangerous or unhealthy.	3%	16%	29%	52%
5. I enjoy reading or being read to.	17%	36%	23%	24%
6. I build friendships with other people.	1%	11%	39%	49%
7. I care about school.	4%	11%	33%	52%
8. I do my homework.	1%	6%	24%	68%
9. I say no to tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.	4%	1%	5%	90%
10. I enjoy learning.	6%	26%	45%	23%
11. I express my feelings in proper ways.	2%	22%	53%	23%
12. I feel good about my future.	3%	15%	45%	37%
13. I ask my parents for advice.	7%	24%	37%	32%
14. I deal with disappointment without getting too upset.	6%	32%	44%	18%
15. I find good ways to deal with things that are hard in my life.	2%	20%	53%	25%
16. I think it is important to help other people.	1%	5%	28%	67%
17. I feel safe at home.	1%	5%	21%	73%
18. I plan ahead and make good choices.	2%	12%	45%	41%
19. I stay away from bad influences.	2%	8%	34%	56%

<i>Developmental Assets Profile</i> Items	Not at all or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
20. I resolve conflicts without anyone getting hurt.	1%	11%	47%	42%
21. I feel valued and appreciated by others.	4%	17%	44%	35%
22. I take responsibility for what I do.	1%	9%	50%	40%
23. I tell the truth even when it is not easy.	2%	22%	49%	26%
24. I accept people who are different from me.	0%	3%	28%	68%
25. I feel safe at school.	3%	11%	34%	52%
26. I am trying to learn new things.	2%	17%	49%	33%
27. I am thinking about what my purpose is in life.	3%	17%	42%	38%
28. I am encouraged to try things that might be good for me.	2%	11%	45%	43%
29. I am included in family tasks and decisions.	2%	18%	39%	41%
30. I am helping to make my school, neighborhood, or city a better place.	5%	27%	43%	25%
31. I am involved in a church, synagogue, mosque, or other religious group.	30%	19%	22%	29%
32. I am developing good health habits.	1%	14%	46%	38%
33. I am encouraged to help others.	1%	9%	39%	51%
34. I am involved in a sport, club, or other group.	2%	6%	14%	78%
35. I am trying to help solve world problems like hunger or disease.	5%	22%	45%	27%
36. I am given useful roles and responsibilities.	2%	17%	47%	34%
37. I am developing respect for other people.	1%	7%	39%	54%
38. I am eager to do well in school and other activities.	1%	8%	24%	67%
39. I am sensitive to the needs and feelings of others.	3%	15%	41%	41%
40. I am involved in creative things such as music, theater, or art.	20%	24%	22%	34%

<i>Developmental Assets Profile</i> Items	Not at all or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
41. I am serving others in my community.	6%	33%	40%	21%
42. I am spending quality time at home with my parent(s) when we do things together.	3%	19%	38%	40%
43. I have friends who set good examples for me.	2%	13%	46%	39%
44. I have a school that gives students clear rules.	4%	15%	34%	48%
45. I have adults who are good role models for me.	1%	6%	27%	65%
46. I have a safe neighborhood.	1%	3%	19%	77%
47. I have parent(s) who try to help me succeed.	0%	2%	15%	82%
48. I have good neighbors who care about me.	6%	19%	29%	46%
49. I have a school that cares about kids and encourages them.	4%	13%	34%	49%
50. I have teachers who urge me to develop and achieve.	2%	11%	40%	47%
51. I have support from adults other than my parent(s).	3%	13%	29%	54%
52. I have a family that provides me with clear rules.	1%	8%	30%	61%
53. I have parent(s) who urge me to do well in school.	1%	2%	17%	80%
54. I have a family that gives me love and support.	0%	3%	17%	80%
55. I have neighbors who help watch out for me.	10%	24%	32%	34%
56. I have parent(s) who are good at talking with me about things.	3%	13%	31%	53%
57. I have a school that enforces rules fairly.	8%	21%	36%	34%
58. I have a family that knows where I am and what I am doing.	1%	6%	28%	65%

APPENDIX 3: BACKGROUND ON THE DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

Grounded in research in youth development, resiliency, and prevention, Search Institute’s framework of Developmental Assets identifies key relationships, opportunities, and personal strengths youth need to avoid risks and to thrive. (See the next page for a list of 40 assets.)

Originally developed for adolescence in the United States, the framework has been adapted to be appropriate for early childhood, early elementary, upper elementary, and college ages as well. In addition, Search Institute is working with international partners to culturally adapt and measure the framework in multiple countries and cultures around the world.

The Power of Assets. Studies of more than 4 million young people in the United States consistently show that the more assets young people have, the less likely they are to engage in a wide range of high-risk behaviors (see table below) and the more likely they are to thrive.

Assets have power for all young people, regardless of their gender, economic status, family, or race/ethnicity. As shown below, the levels of assets youth report is consistently associated with lower levels of risk behaviors and higher levels of thriving indicators. Levels of assets are better predictors of high-risk involvement and thriving than are poverty or family structure.

For more on the research behind the assets, see the publications listed in Appendix 7.

The Gap and Challenge. The average young person experiences only about half of the 40 assets. This gap is evident with all subgroups of youth in all types of communities and settings. The gap in assets calls for transformative change in how we nurture children and youth.

Percentage of 6th- to 12th-Grade Youth Reporting Selected High-Risk Behavior Patterns and Thriving Indicators, by Levels of Developmental Assets*

	0–10 Assets	11–20 Assets	21–30 Assets	31–40 Assets
Violence —Has engaged in three or more acts of fighting, hitting, injuring a person, carrying or using a weapon, or threatening physical harm in the past year.	60	34	15	4
School Problems —Has skipped school two or more days in the past month and/or has below a C average.	41	19	7	3
Good Health —Percentage of youth reporting they pay attention to healthy nutrition and exercise.	29	51	73	91
Leadership —Percentage of youth reporting they have been a leader of a group or organization in the past 12 months.	45	63	77	86

* Data based on aggregate Search Institute sample of almost 90,000 students, grades 6 to 12, across the United States surveyed in 2010 (see Benson, Scales, Roehlkepartain, & Leffert, 2011, in Appendix 7). These data are from the *Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes & Behaviors* survey. The *Developmental Assets Profile* has not yet been used to show relationships to these specific outcomes. But higher DAP asset levels have been shown to have similar relationships to better college and career readiness in a large U.S. city sample (Scales, Pekel, & Roehlkepartain, 2013) and to better workforce/ livelihoods development, education, and civic engagement in a study of four developing countries (Scales, Roehlkepartain, & Fraher, 2012).

THE FRAMEWORK OF DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS FOR ADOLESCENTS

EXTERNAL ASSETS	INTERNAL ASSETS
<p>Support</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Family support</i>—Family life provides high levels of love and support. 2. <i>Positive family communication</i>—Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek parent(s) advice and counsel. 3. <i>Other adult relationships</i>—Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults. 4. <i>Caring neighborhood</i>—Young person experiences caring neighbors. 5. <i>Caring school climate</i>—School provides a caring, encouraging environment. 6. <i>Parent involvement in schooling</i>—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school. <p>Empowerment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. <i>Community values youth</i>—Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth. 8. <i>Youth as resources</i>—Young people are given useful roles in the community. 9. <i>Service to others</i>—Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week. 10. <i>Safety</i>—Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood. <p>Boundaries and Expectations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. <i>Family boundaries</i>—Family has clear rules and consequences, and monitors the young person’s whereabouts. 12. <i>School boundaries</i>—School provides clear rules and consequences. 13. <i>Neighborhood boundaries</i>—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people’s behavior. 14. <i>Adult role models</i>—Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior. 15. <i>Positive peer influence</i>—Young person’s best friends model responsible behavior. 16. <i>High expectations</i>—Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well. <p>Constructive Use of Time</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. <i>Creative activities</i>—Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts. 18. <i>Youth programs</i>—Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations. 19. <i>Religious community</i>—Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution. 20. <i>Time at home</i>—Young person is out with friends “with nothing special to do,” two or fewer nights per week. 	<p>Commitment to Learning</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. <i>Achievement motivation</i>—Young person is motivated to do well in school. 22. <i>School engagement</i>—Young person is actively engaged in learning. 23. <i>Homework</i>—Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day. 24. <i>Bonding to school</i>—Young person cares about her or his school. 25. <i>Reading for pleasure</i>—Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week. <p>Positive Values</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 26. <i>Caring</i>—Young person places high value on helping other people. 27. <i>Equality and social justice</i>—Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty. 28. <i>Integrity</i>—Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs. 29. <i>Honesty</i>—Young person “tells the truth even when it is not easy.” 30. <i>Responsibility</i>—Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility. 31. <i>Restraint</i>—Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs. <p>Social Competencies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 32. <i>Planning and decision-making</i>—Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices. 33. <i>Interpersonal competence</i>—Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills. 34. <i>Cultural competence</i>—Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds. 35. <i>Resistance skills</i>—Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations. 36. <i>Peaceful conflict resolution</i>—Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently. <p>Positive Identity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 37. <i>Personal power</i>—Young person feels he or she has control over “things that happen to me.” 38. <i>Self-esteem</i>—Young person reports having a high self-esteem. 39. <i>Sense of purpose</i>—Young person reports that “my life has a purpose.” 40. <i>Positive view of personal future</i>—Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future. <p>Copyright © 1997 by Search Institute, 615 First Ave. NE, Suite 125, Minneapolis, MN 55415; 800-888-7828; www.search-institute.org.</p>

APPENDIX 4: THE DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS PROFILE (DAP) SURVEY

The *Developmental Assets Profile* is a brief measure of Developmental Assets framework. Originally developed by Search Institute in 2005, the survey has been shown to be a highly reliable and valid tool across a wide range of youth populations in the United States as well as other countries. (See Scales, 2011, in Appendix 7.)

The survey consists of 58 items that ask young people how often or how much they experience a variety of possible strengths, in themselves, and in their families, schools, and communities. The items are organized in two ways:

- Eight *categories* of Developmental Assets (Appendix 5).
- Five asset-building contexts (personal, social, family, school, and community) (Appendix 6).

Young people answer each question by choosing one of these options: Not at all or Rarely; Somewhat or Sometimes; Very or Often; and Extremely or Almost Always. DAP scores are given on a scale of 0-30 for individual asset categories and context areas, and 0-60 for the total asset score. Complete information on scoring is available in the DAP User Manual.

By itself, the DAP only measures young people's overall experiences of the categories and contexts of Developmental Assets (not the individual 40 assets). However, during the development of the instrument, these total asset scores were shown to be highly correlated with longer measures of all 40 Developmental Assets ($r=.82, p<.001$).⁹ Thus, the DAP is an efficient, reliable, and valid overall measure of Developmental Assets.

In addition, several studies have confirmed that **scores on the DAP are strong predictors of other positive outcomes**. For example, in the original pilot study (with 1,300 youth):

- *High-risk behavior patterns*—Youth scoring in the “challenged” level reported on average 3.2 and 2.8 high-risk behavior patterns (out of 10) for males and females, respectively. Youth scoring in the “thriving” range, reported on average only 0.5 high-risk behavior patterns for males and 0.3 for females.
- *Thriving*—Both males and females in the “challenged” range on the DAP reported few thriving indicators (means = 2.2 and 2.6 for males and females respectively, out of 8), such as school success, affirmation of diversity, and leadership. Youth in the “thriving” range reported about 6 of 8 thriving indicators.

⁹ Correlations can range from 0-1.0. A correlation of this magnitude, .82, is considered quite high and suggests that the two assets surveys are measuring substantially the same things, even though the longer survey measures the 40 individual assets and the briefer one (the DAP) measures the 8 asset categories.

APPENDIX 5: ALIGNMENT OF DAP ITEMS WITH ASSET CATEGORIES

External Asset Categories

I. Support

- 13. I ask my parents for advice.
- 47. I have parent(s) who try to help me succeed.
- 48. I have good neighbors who care about me.
- 49. I have a school that cares about kids and encourages them.
- 51. I have support from adults other than my parent(s).
- 54. I have a family that gives me love and support.
- 56. I have parent(s) who are good at talking with me about things.

II. Empowerment

- 17. I feel safe at home.
- 21. I feel valued and appreciated by others.
- 25. I feel safe at school.
- 29. I am included in family tasks and decisions.
- 36. I am given useful roles and responsibilities.
- 46. I have a safe neighborhood.

III. Boundaries and Expectations

- 43. I have friends who set good examples for me.
- 44. I have a school that gives students clear rules.
- 45. I have adults who are good role models for me.
- 50. I have teachers who urge me to develop and achieve.
- 52. I have a family that provides me with clear rules.
- 53. I have parent(s) who urge me to do well in school.
- 55. I have neighbors who help watch out for me.
- 57. I have a school that enforces rules fairly.
- 58. I have a family that knows where I am and what I am doing.

IV. Constructive Use of Time

- 31. I am involved in a church, synagogue, mosque, or other religious group.
- 34. I am involved in a sport, club, or other group.
- 40. I am involved in creative things such as music, theater, or art.
- 42. I am spending quality time at home with my parent(s) when we do things together.

NOTE: Numbers before the items refer to their number in the survey, not to an indication of their ranking or importance.

Internal Asset Categories

V. Commitment to Learning

- 5. I enjoy reading or being read to.
- 7. I care about school.
- 8. I do my homework.
- 10. I enjoy learning.
- 26. I am trying to learn new things.
- 28. I am encouraged to try things that might be good for me.
- 38. I am eager to do well in school and other activities.

VI. Positive Values

- 1. I tell other people what I believe in.
- 9. I say no to tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.
- 16. I think it is important to help other people.
- 22. I take responsibility for what I do.
- 23. I tell the truth even when it is not easy.
- 30. I am helping to make my school, neighborhood or city a better place.
- 32. I am developing good health habits.
- 33. I am encouraged to help others.
- 35. I am trying to help solve world problems like hunger or disease.
- 37. I am developing respect for other people.
- 41. I am serving others in my community.

VII. Social Competencies

- 4. I say no to things that are dangerous or unhealthy.
- 6. I build friendships with other people.
- 11. I express my feelings in proper ways.
- 18. I plan ahead and make good choices.
- 19. I stay away from bad influences.
- 20. I resolve conflicts without anyone getting hurt.
- 24. I accept people who are different from me.
- 39. I am sensitive to the needs and feelings of others.

VIII. Positive Identity

- 2. I feel in control of my life and future.
- 3. I feel good about myself.
- 12. I feel good about my future.
- 14. I deal with disappointment without getting too upset.
- 15. I find good ways to deal with things that are hard in my life.
- 27. I am thinking about what my purpose is in life.

APPENDIX 6: ALIGNMENT OF DAP ITEMS WITH ASSET-BUILDING CONTEXTS

A. Personal

1. I tell other people what I believe in.
2. I feel in control of my life and future.
3. I feel good about myself.
4. I say no to things that are dangerous or unhealthy.
5. I enjoy reading or being read to.
9. I say no to tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.
12. I feel good about my future.
14. I deal with disappointment without getting too upset.
18. I plan ahead and make good choices.
22. I take responsibility for what I do.
23. I tell the truth even when it is not easy.
27. I am thinking about what my purpose is in life.
32. I am developing good health habits.

B. Social

6. I build friendships with other people.
11. I express my feelings in proper ways.
15. I find good ways to deal with things that are hard in my life.
16. I think it is important to help other people.
19. I stay away from bad influences.
20. I resolve conflicts without anyone getting hurt.
21. I feel valued and appreciated by others.
28. I am encouraged to try things that might be good for me.
33. I am encouraged to help others.
39. I am sensitive to the needs and feelings of others.
43. I have friends who set good examples for me.
45. I have adults who are good role models for me.
51. I have support from adults other than my parent(s).

C. Family

13. I ask my parents for advice.
17. I feel safe at home.
29. I am included in family tasks and decisions.
42. I am spending quality time at home with my parent(s) when we do things together.
47. I have parent(s) who try to help me succeed.
52. I have a family that provides me with clear rules.
53. I have parent(s) who urge me to do well in school.
54. I have a family that gives me love and support.
56. I have parent(s) who are good at talking with me about things.
58. I have a family that knows where I am and what I am doing.

D. School

7. I care about school.
8. I do my homework.
10. I enjoy learning.
25. I feel safe at school.
26. I am trying to learn new things.
38. I am eager to do well in school and other activities.
44. I have a school that gives students clear rules.
49. I have a school that cares about kids and encourages them.
50. I have teachers who urge me to develop and achieve.
57. I have a school that enforces rules fairly.

E. Community

24. I accept people who are different from me.
30. I am helping to make my school, neighborhood, or city a better place.
31. I am involved in a church, synagogue, mosque, or other religious group.
34. I am involved in a sport, club, or other group.
35. I am trying to help solve world problems like hunger or disease.
36. I am given useful roles and responsibilities.
37. I am developing respect for other people.
40. I am involved in creative things such as music, theater, or art.
41. I am serving others in my community.
46. I have a safe neighborhood.
48. I have good neighbors who care about me.
55. I have neighbors who help watch out for me.

NOTE: Numbers before the items refer to their number in the survey, not to an indication of their ranking or importance.

APPENDIX 7: RESOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

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For more resources, visit www.search-institute.org.

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