

Why Assets? Benefits of Adopting the Developmental Assets Framework

- The Developmental Assets Framework is a **strength-based, positive approach** to addressing youth development and student success. In the Assets Framework youth are viewed as opportunities deserving of investment, not problems to be fixed. They are seen as rich resources with much to give, not as a burden or drain on the system.
- The Developmental Assets Framework gives all stakeholders (school district employees, parents, students, non-profits, businesses and community members) a **common language** for discussing youth issues. In the same way, Assets also provide a **shared lens** for creating a supportive and consistent environment for youth across multiple contexts.
- Developmental Assets are a great equalizer, bringing people from various cultures, economic groups, religions and sectors together around the **common goal of successful youth**. The Assets are widely understood and generally acceptable to all peoples.
- The Assets are **universal** in their application. All kids need assets in their lives to thrive regardless of individual differences, family background, cultural heritage or socio-economic status. All kids do better with more assets.
- Developmental Assets address the **whole child**, taking into consideration relationships, skills, experiences and circumstances that may influence the amount of assets a child has. Assets are built externally and internally and address strengths, supports, skills and attitudes.
- Developmental Assets are **actionable**. Specific assets can be built in, with and around a child (or group of children) to counteract negative and challenging circumstances. Children who have many assets are shown to be resilient and ultimately successful despite struggles in school or family life.
- Developmental Assets are **simple and every day**, but not always obvious. Once alerted to the simplicity of operating with an Assets mindset, anyone can easily adapt their style to be an asset-builder with youth and make decisions in daily activities that will promote increased assets.
- Developmental Assets are **measurable**. SEARCH Institute has conducted widely-renown research on Developmental Assets for over 25 years and has demonstrated Assets to be an effective way for communities and schools to bring about positive change. Faribault Public Schools already surveys segments of their students in order to monitor how many assets they possess. Bethlehem Academy, Cannon River STEM School and Discovery School also participate in the DAP survey providing a more complete picture of youth across the community. This meaningful survey data provides a useful tool for identifying areas of strength and areas of opportunity. It can also inform program decisions and other strategies to improve outcomes.
- The Developmental Assets are recognized around the world as **best-practice** in youth development. Potential funders, including state and federal grant programs, will consider more seriously applicants who are committed to using evidence-based strategies to address the needs of local youth and can demonstrate a collaborative approach. Faribault Public Schools are already applying for competitive grants with assets as their foundation.
- Efforts to promote and utilize the Developmental Assets Framework are **already underway** among Faribault community partners. Allina Health, Cannon River STEM School, City of Faribault - Buckham Library and Parks & Recreation, Faribault Public Schools Community Education, Rice County Public Health and So How Are the Children have all actively participated in providing training to their staff and/or are regularly disseminating information about the Assets. Faribault Youth Investment, the convening organization around the Assets Framework, is preparing to launch a community-wide campaign in August and September that will raise community awareness about the importance of asset building, investing in the lives of youth and creating a community where all youth thrive. Considerable financial investments have already been made to equip leaders to conduct trainings, develop avenues for information sharing and create systems to support collaborative youth initiatives based on the Assets.