

BUILDING ASSETS

Reducing Risks



A SCHOOL REFORM MODEL FOR GRADES 6–10

• SCOPE AND SEQUENCE •

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A School Reform Model for Grades 6–10

What Is *Building Assets, Reducing Risks*?

Building Assets, Reducing Risks is a strength-based educational model originally created to help students manage the transition to high school. This school reform model can be adapted successfully for use in grades 6–10. The two fundamental pillars in *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* are (1) creating positive, intentional relationships and (2) using real-time student data in collaborative problem-solving settings to guide instructional action.

The model consists of three main resources:

1. The Implementation Guide
2. The Classroom Curriculum, also called “I-Time”
3. Training and ongoing support through needs assessment and technical assistance

The eight components/strategies of this model are

1. Professional development
2. Restructuring course schedules
3. Contextual support
4. Parent/guardian involvement
5. A whole student emphasis
6. The I-Time curriculum
7. Block/team meetings and collaborative problem-solving
8. Risk Review meetings

All the materials needed to implement the model are included in the Implementation Guide and the Classroom Curriculum.

The following is a brief description of each strategy of the *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* educational model.

STRATEGY 1:

Relationship-Building Professional Development for Teachers, School Counselors, Mental Health Specialists, and Administrators

Professional development in many schools concentrates on content, instructional recommendations, and analysis of achievement data. Often absent is training on the importance of the student-teacher relationship as the fundamental driver of achievement motivation, defining a positive framework for building relationships, creating a learning-oriented teacher-student experience, and using student-level data in real time to enhance motivation. Through *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* professional development, school staff learn to create asset-oriented relationships in their interactions with students, parents/guardians, and colleagues. Professional development begins with a two-day training prior to the school year and continues with periodic team meetings and in-situation coaching.

STRATEGY 2:

Restructuring the School Course Schedule

Often, course schedules at schools are designed by administrators for maximum flexibility in making classes available to students and offering “singletons”—classes that are unique and require a specific instructor. Whether or not this scheduling benefits overall student achievement is seldom considered. In contrast, the *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* approach assists school administrators with restructuring their school to maximize learning. Teachers are formed into “blocks/teams” and are given a common preparation period in which they meet to monitor progress of students in their block. All students are assigned to a block of teachers. Students share a common group of teachers in three core classes (usually English, math, and science and/or social studies).

STRATEGY 3:

Contextual Support (Focus on Leadership)

Transforming a school requires support from the entire school community with a focus on involving leaders who play a critical role in a school’s operational effectiveness. While leadership research, training institutes, and consultations abound, rarely are these integrated with evidence-based instruction for teachers or a developmental view of adolescents. Any school reform, regardless of how evidence-based it is or how effective it’s been shown to be, is likely to fail if administrators do not see and support its value. *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* taps into the motivations of nearly all education administrators to “do what is right for the kids.”

STRATEGY 4:

Parent/Guardian Involvement to Support School Reform

Parents/guardians are often unclear about what their role is as their child enters middle school and high school. Parent/guardian orientations traditionally address the “nuts and bolts” of school credit acquisition and school rules; they do little to set the stage for the necessary student-teacher relationships that foster student achievement. *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* facilitates a new approach by focusing on parent/guardian and adolescent assets, recognizing the shared interests of parents/guardians and teachers in developing striving children, and providing opportunities for effective parent-teacher collaboration. Parent/guardian involvement is fostered through an orientation conducted in late summer, followed by an invitation to join a parent/guardian advisory council.

STRATEGY 5:

Whole Student Emphasis in Instructional Reform

Performance pressures and long-standing traditions in schools can create responses to failing students that are reactive, disciplinary, and deficit-oriented. An emphasis on tightening controls to motivate students is stressful for teachers, particularly when efforts are ineffective. These same efforts often have adverse effects on student academic motivation. *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* draws out teachers’ natural belief in a positive future for students by training them to look intentionally for student assets, integrate these into classroom motivational plans, and use them strategically with underachieving students. As teachers work collaboratively through the block meeting process and delivery of I-Time, they develop an understanding of how to work with the whole student.

STRATEGY 6:

Developmental Assets Curriculum (I-Time)

Typical school teachers take pride in producing a successful student but do not intentionally form a bond with the student. Motivation to succeed in school does not thrive in this production-oriented environment. Particularly for the underachieving student and for students who are passive participants in school, an environment charged with learning-enabling relationships is key to improved achievement. The I-Time curriculum stimulates social-emotional learning in a broad range of asset-based topics. Students receive, from their content block teachers, a thirty-minute lesson each week from the I-Time curriculum. This is a strength-based, relationship-focused curriculum.

STRATEGY 7:

Block/Team Meetings and Collaborative Problem-Solving

Teachers often work in “silos” and are applauded for managing their classroom and not consulting and/or referring students. Across departments there are seldom discussions about curricula, much less students. *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* creates an opportunity for collaborative problem-solving among core class teachers and provides training on the knowledge and skills needed for successful intervention with failing students. *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* is unlike typical academies in that the process skills necessary for effective collaboration are articulated and coached. Teachers meet several days per week in their Teacher Block/Team meetings to monitor progress of all the students in their block/team. High-risk students are identified and referrals are made. At least weekly, each block/team also meets with the mental health specialist (that is, school counselor or school social worker), *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* coordinator, and administrator in charge of discipline in Big Block meetings to facilitate review and referrals. Action plans incorporate student assets and the identification of student strengths.

STRATEGY 8:

Risk Review

A percentage of students in a typical school will continue to fail classes they are capable of passing, even when teachers, school counselors, and administrators work to find solutions to unleash their potential. Continuous, but unsuccessful, support for troubled students can affirm that the student is a failure and simultaneously engender teacher frustration and resentment. Most recommended solutions for failing students do not offer an option for non-responding students. The *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* approach trains teachers to recognize “level-3 students” (persistently failing students). Teachers learn to accept the limits of their interventions and to act assertively by transferring problem-solving responsibility to the Risk Review team. In Risk Review meetings, school staff learn how to engage in collaborative problem-solving to leverage school and community resources to help the student.

A key facet of both strategies 7 and 8 is the use of real-time data. Block team and Risk Review members access academic records via the school information system (SIS) in real time while a student is being reviewed, in order to identify and address the academic and non-academic needs of the student and guide the choice of interventions.

What Are the Goals of *Building Assets, Reducing Risks*?

The model seeks to help youth succeed in school by increasing the overall health of students and achieving the following goals:

1. Students earning all course credits toward graduation
(reduced academic failure)
2. Students earning higher achievement scores
3. Students more engaged in learning
4. Students reducing adverse effects of alcohol and other drugs

These goals are interrelated, and the eight model strategies address all goals concurrently.

Who Is the Intended Audience?

Building Assets, Reducing Risks can be used as a school reform model in a variety of school settings: public or private; large or small; rural, urban, or suburban. Research has been conducted on this model for ninth graders as they enter high school, but it can be adapted for use with tenth-grade students as well as middle school, and junior high schools.

This educational model was originally developed and researched as a comprehensive approach to helping first-year high school students feel welcome and excited about succeeding in their high school careers. The model addresses multiple issues ranging from school climate to teacher responsiveness. *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* aims to create a climate and culture that invigorates the entire school environment and helps all students succeed.

Is *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* an Evidence-Based Model?

Building Assets, Reducing Risks is an evidence-based model with more than fifteen years of data to substantiate its success in turning around low-performing schools. Based on this success, it was the recipient of a 2010 U.S. Department of Education “Investing in Innovation” (i3) Development grant and a 2013 U.S. Department of Education “Investing in Innovation” (i3) Validation grant, and is also included in the National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP).

The *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* model was developed in 1999, integrating Developmental Assets theory with Risk and Protective Factor theory. It was first implemented at St. Louis Park High School in Minnesota. Teams of teachers were structured into blocks. In Teacher Block meetings, they monitored data on all ninth-grade students with an emphasis on preventing academic failures and substance use and encouraging all students to thrive. Teachers also delivered an asset-based I-Time curriculum for thirty minutes per week, to foster relationship building and trust with students. Students at risk were referred to a Risk Review team for selective and indicated prevention efforts.

The researchers found that prior to implementation, St. Louis Park High School had a 44–47 percent failure rate (students receiving one or more “Fs”). The rate decreased to 28 percent in one year. Current failure rates are 14 percent. The percentage of students passing all core subjects is 87 percent. *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* has moved the number of high school students of color into honors courses from eight to ninety-six, and the number of credits earned for honors courses per year for students of color from 16 to over 212. The percentage of African American and Hispanic students taking advanced placement (AP) and honors courses is consistent with percentages within the overall school population (24 percent and 9 percent, respectively). In 2012, St. Louis Park High School had a graduation rate of 80 percent for students of color. The state average for Minnesota was 40 percent.

A randomized controlled trial was conducted during the 2011–2012 school year at a large, suburban California high school. It included 548 students randomly assigned to either participate in *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* or in a control group. Of the students, 37 percent were Hispanic and 18 percent were English language learners. Results showed a significant fall–spring language achievement gain and a significant difference in gain between the two study groups, when controlling for student gender and Hispanic status. Similar achievement patterns for the two study groups were also seen for Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) math achievement scores. Hispanic students in the control group made no gains in math achievement, while Hispanic students in the *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* intervention group made significant gains, equivalent to those seen among non-Hispanic students.

A study was also conducted in 2011–2012 at two rural high schools with high poverty rates in Maine. At one of the schools, the students assigned to the *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* group earned higher number grades, letter grades, and more credits in science and social studies than their peers. At the other school, significant gains were seen in social studies. Further research needs to be conducted at these sites to determine how gender, free/reduced lunch, and student motivation affect these results.

The *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* educational model has been proven to

- increase the number of students who are earning course credits toward graduation, leading to improved graduation rates
- raise achievement scores
- increase student engagement in learning
- reduce the rates of alcohol and other drug use
- increase student achievement across an entire school grade
- identify students who should be accelerated into gifted programming
- increase academic success of middle-level students
- decrease educational disparities among groups of students

Students at St. Louis Park High School participate every three years in the Minnesota Student Survey. The following positive outcomes have been identified:

- increased positive teacher-student relationships
- decreased alcohol and other drug use
- increased positive feelings toward school
- decreased bullying rates for boys
- increased job satisfaction for teachers

**How Is *Building Assets, Reducing Risks*
Different from Other School Reform Programs?**

Building Assets, Reducing Risks is a multifaceted educational model that is distinct from other school reform programs due to its six key principles:

PRINCIPLE 1:

Emphasizes the Strengths of Students

The *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* educational model is built on the foundation that caring relationships, high expectations, and opportunities for participation are critical elements for healthy systems that encourage learning and development. This belief is consistent with research that shows youth with more assets tend to engage in fewer high-risk behaviors and that protective factors can buffer risks. All model elements were selected based on their connection to specific Developmental Assets and risk/protective factors that have been shown to be associated with reductions in specific problems of first-year secondary students.

PRINCIPLE 2:

Focuses on the Whole Class

The strength-based approach recognizes that all young people need positive opportunities, experiences, relationships, and personal strengths identified in the Developmental Assets and Risk/Protective Factors frameworks. Building assets and increasing protective factors are important for young people from all backgrounds and family situations. The model serves all students in the class rather than targeting individuals. Another strength of this model is that teachers using real-time data can identify students who can achieve more and then encourage and accelerate them. In this way, the model transforms all students' school experience. The students impacted through the *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* intervention are not just the ones considered "at risk" or the gifted students, but rather all students. All students are encouraged to do their best through intentional relationship building and instructional interventions. Relationships are the key drivers for this model's success.

PRINCIPLE 3:

Addresses All Risk Factor Issues Simultaneously

Many school initiatives focus on correcting one or two issues at a time. *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* is unique because it addresses many issues simultaneously. To support healthy development, students who exhibit any risky behaviors (such as academic failure, truancy, substance use, or discipline issues) receive particular attention. Through the use of questionnaires and surveys, staff can create support groups for students with particular challenges. With the use of real-time data, staff intervene quickly with individuals who need help, thereby supporting the healthy development of the whole class. This model greatly reduces the likelihood that risky behaviors become the norm.

PRINCIPLE 4:

Combines System-wide and Individual Intervention Strategies

Great emphasis is placed on providing support to the healthy development of all students through both schoolwide and individual intervention strategies. Students change rapidly. The *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* educational model is designed to identify behavior changes in students, then determine if the changes are simply developmental adjustments or indications of risk. The model focuses on building relationships and paying attention to each student's situation.

PRINCIPLE 5:

Coordinates All Model Strategies

To reach all students, staff members coordinate efforts to ensure that students' needs are being addressed and resources are well used. The model also gives teachers the opportunity to meet regularly and form an identity as a group. Social network analyses have identified a "spillover effect" that occurs when teachers work together;¹ such effects have been directly linked to positive student academic outcomes.

PRINCIPLE 6:

Increases Teacher Effectiveness

A highly effective teacher is a teacher whose students achieve high rates of academic growth in a school year (such as one and one-half grade levels).² The randomized controlled trial of *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* produced an average of two years of academic growth for students in the experimental group. Students gained two years of academic growth in math (eighth grade to tenth grade equivalent), compared to a loss of one year in the control group (eighth grade to seventh grade equivalent). The fundamental importance of highly effective and well-supported teachers to student success has been amply documented.³ Indeed, research

demonstrates that a teacher's relative effectiveness is the most important school-level factor influencing student performance.⁴ Results from the first two years of the *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* i3 development grant reveal that investment in effective teacher teams has direct benefits for students.

Each of the *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* blocks/teams includes at least one experienced and highly effective teacher. Because teams work together on assessments, problem-solving, and planning on a weekly basis, this design ensures that high-need students have direct access to at least one highly effective teacher, and it extends the impact of these highly effective teachers into all of these students' core classrooms. Teacher effectiveness is essential to student success and school turnaround and is influenced by a number of intersecting variables, including the extent to which teachers have (1) opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and collaboration, (2) capacity to build positive, intentional relationships with their colleagues and students, and (3) contextual support from parents/guardians and school leaders. *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* creates highly effective teacher teams using a unique blend of interrelated approaches designed to impact these three critical variables.

What Is the Theoretical Base of *Building Assets, Reducing Risks*?

The *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* educational model is one of the first school-based models that integrates the Developmental Assets framework, Risk and Protective Factors focused on prevention strategies, and the Attribution Theory of Student Motivation.

Developmental Assets

Developmental Assets are factors that are critical for young people's successful growth and development.⁵ This model identifies forty Developmental Assets that children and adolescents need for developing healthy, responsible, and caring characteristics. These assets shape young people's behavior. The more assets young people experience, the more they engage in positive behaviors, such as volunteering and succeeding in school. Those with fewer assets are more likely to engage in risk-taking behaviors, such as alcohol and other drug use, antisocial behavior, and violence.

Risk and Protective Factors

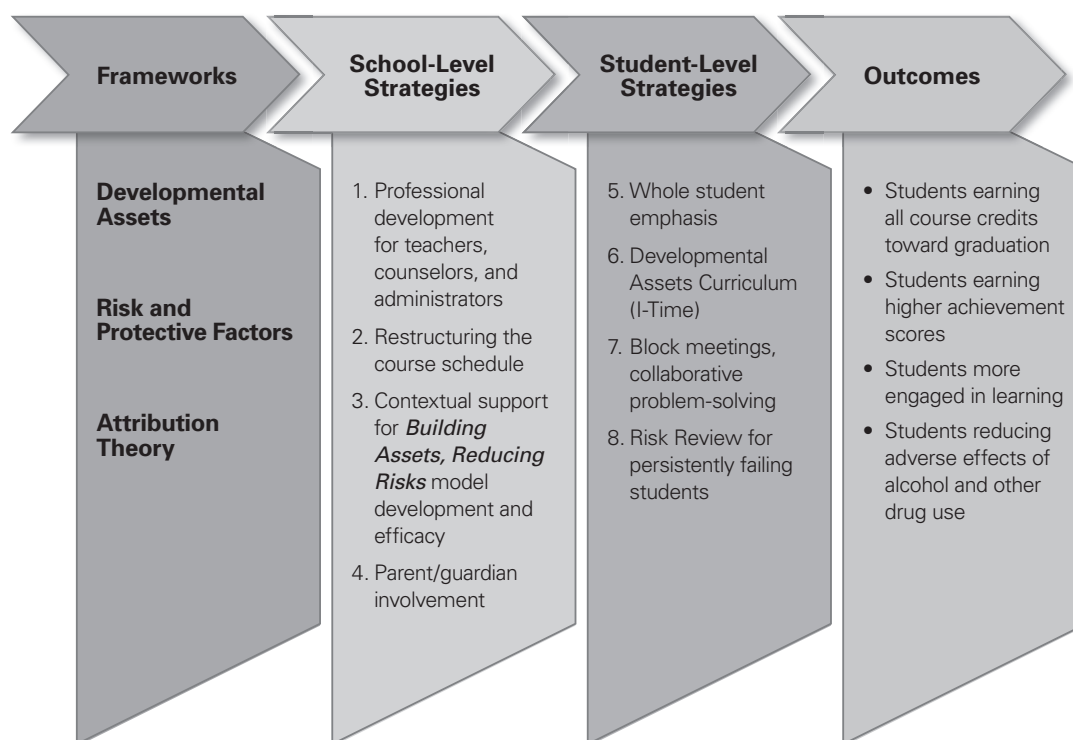
Prevention focused on risk and protective factors is based on a simple premise: To prevent a problem from happening, we need to identify the factors that increase the risk of that problem developing, then find ways to reduce that risk. At the same time, we must also identify those factors that buffer individuals from the risk factors in their environments and find ways to increase their protection.⁶

Attribution Theory of Student Motivation

Building Assets, Reducing Risks also integrates the Attribution Theory of Student Motivation, which explains the cognitive-behavioral-social process by which students develop beliefs about their ability to succeed in school. Academic success can be affected by students combining and managing their academic and social concerns together. The atmosphere and context in which they learn can influence their motivation. And the way in which teachers and students interact also contributes to student motivation and achievement.⁷

Logic Model for Building Assets, Reducing Risks

The logic model for *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* identifies the three theories described above as the frameworks of the model. Combining four school-level strategies and four student-level strategies with use of real-time data, schools can achieve four important outcomes leading to success: (1) students earning all course credits toward graduation, (2) students earning higher achievement scores, (3) students more engaged in learning, and (4) students reducing adverse effects of alcohol and other drugs. The following is a logic model for *Building Assets, Reducing Risks*. For a more detailed logic model, see appendix 4 of the Implementation Guide.



What Is the General Timeline for Implementation of *Building Assets, Reducing Risks*?

Ideally it would be good to spend about two to three months in planning before implementing *Building Assets, Reducing Risks*. This preparation could be done in consultation with a *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* trainer.

Below is an optimal timeline for implementation of *Building Assets, Reducing Risks*, assuming a launch at the beginning of the fall semester. *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* can be started at any time in the school year, but the most favorable times are at the beginning of a new quarter or semester.

Although this timeline provides a general framework, it is important for each school to implement the model based on their own schedule and constraints.

Target Dates	Activity
Spring semester before the launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Select a coordinator.• Educate the school board and staff about <i>Building Assets, Reducing Risks</i>.• Meet with teachers and staff from younger grades to ascertain student needs prior to entering your school.• Visit younger grade classrooms.
Spring or summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct a training for key staff.• Restructure the school schedule into block teams.
Late summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold the Parent/Guardian Orientation
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Start Teacher Block meetings as well as Big Block meetings.• Visit classrooms to administer the questionnaire and survey.• Meet with students individually to identify needs.• Start support groups for identified students.• Start the I-Time curriculum.
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Start Risk Review meetings.• Start the Parent/Guardian Advisory Council.
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold the Respect Retreat (optional).
Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold Student Orientation for students who will be new to the program next year.
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Release report on positive outcomes from the first year of implementation.• Communicate outcomes with the community.

How Does *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* Address the Needs of School Reform?

The U.S. Department of Education has listed seven key features of turnaround schools.⁸ Schools that implement *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* achieve all of these features by using specific strategies, as seen below.

Key Features of Turnaround Schools	<i>Building Assets, Reducing Risks</i> Strategy
1. Providing strong leadership	Strategy 3: Contextual support (focusing on leadership) for <i>Building Assets, Reducing Risks</i> development and ongoing implementation
2. Ensuring that teachers are effective and able to improve instruction	Strategy 1: Professional development for teachers, school counselors, and administrators to develop asset-oriented relationships in their interactions with students, parents/guardians, and colleagues
3. Redesigning the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration	Strategy 2: Restructuring the course schedule to maximize learning and create opportunities for collaboration among colleagues Strategy 7: Block meetings; collaborative problem-solving among core class teachers
4. Strengthening the school's instructional program based on student needs and ensuring that the instructional program is research-based, rigorous, and aligned with state academic content standards	Strategy 5: Whole student emphasis in instructional reform; teachers look intentionally for student strengths, integrate these into classroom plans, and use them strategically with underachieving students
5. Using data to inform instruction and for continuous improvement, including by providing time for collaboration on the use of data	Use of real-time data is key for achieving Strategies 7 and 8: Block and Risk Review team members access academic records in real time while a student is being reviewed in order to identify the student's academic and non-academic needs and guide practice
6. Establishing a school environment that improves school safety and discipline and addressing other non-academic factors that impact student achievement, such as students' social, emotional, and health needs	Strategy 6: Developmental Assets Curriculum ("I-Time"), which stimulates social-emotional learning on a broad range of topics Strategy 8: Risk Reviews for persistently failing students
7. Providing ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement	Strategy 4: Parent/guardian involvement to support school reform, focusing on parent/guardian and adolescent strengths and increasing parent-teacher collaboration

I-Time Scope and Sequence

Building Assets, Reducing Risks' Classroom Curriculum, also called I-Time, has thirty-seven sessions broken down into ten topic sections, which are to be done in order. Each section's activities achieve a general goal and more defined purposes.

	The purpose of each section is
Section 1: Building a Connected Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to establish rules for creating a respectful community within the classroom • to build community in the classroom by learning participants' names and anecdotal information about others • to help participants develop an understanding of other participants and their commonalities • to help participants become more acquainted with one another, having peers introduce participants to the entire class • to provide an opportunity for participants and staff to develop relationships beyond just a surface level • to build conversation skills • to learn that an effective team requires individuals to assume various roles
Section 2: Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to learn a process for establishing and reaching a goal • to demonstrate the need for goals and dreams • to set personal goals • to understand and practice a decision-making process
Section 3: Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to identify your leadership style • to discover how participants work with people of similar and different leadership styles
Section 4: Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to demonstrate the power of nonverbal communication • to recognize the impact of verbal and nonverbal communication on peers • to recognize and understand how feelings affect communication • to identify specific communication methods that are used to achieve a task • to practice methods that will promote effective communication • to teach participants that it's important to identify people in their lives they can trust and to communicate with those people when making important decisions or facing difficult circumstances • to recognize qualities of a good listener • to recognize how individuals can hear the same information yet process it differently and arrive at different conclusions • to develop responding skills • to learn how to say no in tough situations using refusal skills • to identify stress and stress relievers in participants' lives

Continued ►

	The purpose of each section is
Section 5: Assets Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to analyze students' own assets and compare their responses to those of national norms • to increase understanding of the Developmental Assets framework • to build skills • to identify sources of support in their lives
Section 6: Grief and Loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to understand the process of grief and loss, exploring its impact on our lives
Section 7: Bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to raise awareness of bullying and increase sensitivity to others
Section 8: Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to understand personal values and values of others • to understand how gender roles affect our lives • to identify strengths and areas of needed improvements in your school
Section 9: Risky Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to recognize high-risk behavior • to recognize health-compromising risky behavior • to create positive alternatives to risky behaviors • to recognize a substance use disorder and acquire knowledge about alcohol and other drugs • to understand enabling • to identify and recognize the importance of circles of support
Section 10: Dreams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to strengthen a positive self-identity • to bring a sense of closure to the year • to celebrate the end of the semester, reminding participants of I-Time activities that occurred during the year

Related National Academic Standards

Using *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* will help you meet the following national academic standards:⁹

Health Standards

Knows environmental and external factors that affect individual and community health

Level III (Grade 6–8)

- Knows cultural beliefs, socioeconomic considerations, and other environmental factors within a community that influence the health of its members
- Understands how various messages from the media, peers, and other sources impact health practices
- Understands how peer relationships affect health

Level IV (Grade 9–12)

- Knows how the health of individuals can be influenced by the community
- Understands how the prevention and control of health problems are influenced by research and medical advances
- Understands how cultural diversity enriches and challenges health behaviors

Knows how to maintain mental and emotional health

Level III (Grade 6–8)

- Knows strategies to manage stress and feelings caused by disappointment, separation, or loss
- Knows characteristics and conditions associated with positive self-esteem
- Knows appropriate ways to build and maintain positive relationships with peers, parents, and other adults (e.g., interpersonal communication)
- Understands the difference between safe and risky or harmful behaviors in relationships
- Knows techniques for seeking help and support through appropriate resources

Level IV (Grade 9–12)

- Knows skills used to communicate effectively with family, friends, and others, and the effects of open and honest communication
- Knows strategies for coping with and overcoming feelings of rejection, social isolation, and other forms of stress
- Understands the role of denial as a negative influence on mental and emotional health, and ways to overcome denial and seek assistance when needed

Understands aspects of substance use and abuse

Level III (Grade 6–8)

- Knows conditions that may put people at higher risk for substance abuse problems
- Knows factors involved in the development of a drug dependency and the early, observable signs and symptoms
- Knows the short- and long-term consequences of the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs
- Knows community resources that are available to assist people with alcohol, tobacco, and other drug problems

Level IV (Grade 9–12)

- Knows the short- and long-term effects associated with the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs on reproduction, pregnancy, and the health of children
- Knows how the abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs often plays a role in dangerous behavior and can have adverse consequences on the community
- Understands that alcohol, tobacco, and other drug dependencies are treatable diseases/conditions

Understands the fundamental concepts of growth and development

Level III (Grade 6–8)

- Knows strategies for coping with concerns and stress related to the changes that occur during adolescence

Life Skills Standards

Thinking and Reasoning

Applies decision-making techniques

Level III (Grade 6–8)

- Identifies situations in the community and in one's personal life in which a decision is required
- Secures factual information needed to evaluate alternatives and uses it to predict the consequences of selecting each alternative
- Identifies the values underlying the alternatives that are considered and the criteria that will be used to make a selection among the alternatives
- Analyzes personal decisions in terms of the options that were considered
- Uses a decision-making grid or matrix to make or study decisions involving a relatively limited number of alternatives and criteria

Level IV (Grade 9–12)

- Uses a decision-making grid or matrix to make or study decisions involving a relatively large number of alternatives and criteria
- Evaluates major factors (e.g., personal priorities, environmental conditions, peer groups) that influence personal decisions
- Analyzes the impact of decisions on self and others and takes responsibility for consequences and outcomes of decisions

Working with Others

Contributes to the overall effort of a group

Level IV (Grade K–12)

- Knows the behaviors and skills that contribute to team effectiveness
- Works cooperatively within a group to complete tasks, achieve goals, and solve problems
- Demonstrates respect for others' rights, feelings, and points of view in a group
- Identifies and uses the individual strengths and interests of others to accomplish team goals
- Helps the group establish goals, taking personal responsibility for accomplishing such goals
- Evaluates the overall progress of a group toward a goal
- Contributes to the development of a supportive climate in groups
- Actively listens to the ideas of others and asks clarifying questions
- Takes the initiative in interacting with others
- Uses appropriate strategies when making requests of other people

Uses conflict-resolution techniques

Level IV (Grade K–12)

- Communicates ideas in a manner that does not irritate others
- Understands the impact of criticism on psychological state, emotional state, habitual behavior, and beliefs
- Determines the causes and potential sources of conflicts
- Identifies individual vs. group or organizational interests in conflicts (e.g., works to build consensus within a group while maintaining minority viewpoints)

Works well with diverse individuals and in diverse situations

Level IV (Grade K–12)

- Works well with those of the opposite gender, of differing abilities, and from different age groups
- Works well with those from different ethnic groups, of different religious orientations, and of cultures different from their own

Displays effective interpersonal communication skills

Level IV (Grade K–12)

- Demonstrates appropriate behaviors for relating well with others (e.g., empathy, caring, respect, helping, friendliness, politeness)
- Exhibits positive character traits toward others, including honesty, fairness, dependability, and integrity
- Provides feedback in a constructive manner, and recognizes the importance of seeking and receiving constructive feedback in a non-defensive manner
- Uses nonverbal communication such as eye contact, body position, and gestures effectively
- Demonstrates attentive listening by clarifying messages received (e.g., paraphrasing, questioning)
- Attends to both verbal and nonverbal messages
- Demonstrates sensitivity to cultural diversity (e.g., personal space, use of eye contact, gestures, bias-free language)
- Acknowledges the strengths and achievements of others

Demonstrates leadership skills

Level IV (Grade K–12)

- Understands one's own role as a leader or follower in various situations
- Knows the qualities of good leaders and followers
- Demonstrates and applies leadership skills and qualities (e.g., plans wins and celebrates accomplishments; recognizes the contributions of others; passes on authority when appropriate)

Self-regulation

Sets and manages goals

Level IV (Grade K–12)

- Sets explicit long-term goals and shorter-range sub-goals
- Sets routine goals for improving daily life
- Understands personal wants and needs, and how goal-setting can help one achieve wants and needs
- Displays a sense of personal direction and purpose

Performs self-appraisal

Level IV (Grade K–12)

- Identifies basic values, and distinguishes values from personal preferences, needs, and wants
- Determines appropriate behaviors that are used and should be adopted to obtain wants and/or needs
- Knows personal strengths and weaknesses and techniques for overcoming weaknesses
- Identifies personal motivational patterns, personality characteristics, and style

Considers risks

Level IV (Grade K–12)

- Weighs risks in making decisions and solving problems
- Thinks clearly under stress

Maintains a healthy self-concept

Level IV (Grade K–12)

- Has confidence in one's own abilities, including the ability to succeed
- Uses techniques (e.g., recalling positive things others have said about oneself) to remind self of strengths
- Uses positive affirmations and self-talk to improve sense of self, build confidence, and complete difficult tasks
- Analyzes self-statements for their positive and negative effects
- Uses high self-esteem body language

Notes

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9. Source: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, *National Health Education Standards*, <http://www2.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>.

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