

IN BRIEF

Boosting Student Achievement
New Research on the Power of Developmental Assets

The Question

Should schools, school districts, and other policy makers invest in building developmental assets as a strategy for boosting student achievement?

The Bottom Line

New studies suggest that developmental assets* play a significant role in students' academic achievement across a wide range of students. In fact, developmental assets appear to have as much or more influence on student achievement as other demographic factors and school reform strategies. Thus, building developmental assets has great promise as a strategy for boosting student achievement.

The Evidence

New research, including longitudinal studies, reveals the following:

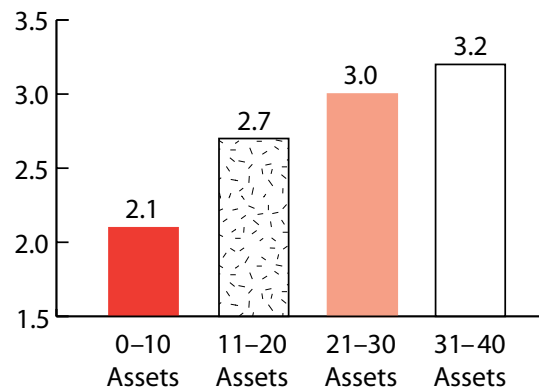
- As shown in Figure A, the higher students' current asset levels, the higher their current GPA. In addition, the more assets students reported in 1998, the higher their GPA *three years* later.
- Students' asset levels are twice as important in predicting achievement as demographic factors such as gender, family composition, socioeconomic status, or race/ethnicity.
- Students whose levels of developmental assets *remained stable* or *increased* had significantly higher GPAs three years later than students who declined in their assets. And the more their assets increased, the

more their GPAs increased.

- Students from *all racial/ethnic backgrounds* with high levels of assets (31–40) are about five to 12 times as likely as those with few assets (0–10) to be successful in school.
- Low-income students who experience more developmental assets appear to be much more likely to do well in school than low-income students who do not experience many developmental assets.

FIGURE A

Average GPA* by Levels of Assets



*4.0 grade point scale.

N = 325 6th- to 12th-grade students in St. Louis Park, Minnesota, 1998.

This page is condensed from Scales, P. C., & Roehlkepartain, E. C. (2003). Boosting student achievement: New research on the power of developmental assets. *Search Institute Insights & Evidence 1* (1), which is available for free downloading at www.search-institute.org/research/insights.

* Developmental assets are positive factors in young people, families, communities, schools, and other settings that have been found to be important in promoting young people's healthy development. Search Institute's framework organizes 40 assets into eight categories: support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity. The complete framework is found in Display 1 of the full report, and more information is available at www.search-institute.org/assets.

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