

How Link Crew Aligns with The Search Institute's Framework for 40 Developmental

Assets from the Search Institute:

Researchers have learned a great deal in the past several decades about elements in human experience that have long-term, positive consequences for young people. Factors such as family dynamics, support from community adults, school effectiveness, peer influence, values development, and social skills have all been identified as contributing to healthy development. However, these different areas of study are typically disconnected from each other.

The framework of Developmental Assets steps back to look at the whole—to pull many pieces together into a comprehensive vision of what young people need to thrive. In addition to roots in the scientific research on adolescent development, the assets grow out of three types of applied research:

- **“Positive youth development,”** which highlights core processes and dynamics in human development that are foundational for growing up healthy.
- **Prevention,** which focuses on protective factors that inhibit high-risk behaviors such as substance abuse, violence, sexual intercourse, and dropping out of school.
- **Resiliency,** which identifies factors that increase young people's ability to rebound in the face of adversity, from poverty to drug-abusing parents to dangerous neighborhoods.

The **Link Crew Program** supports and develops the following 22 Developmental Assets for Adolescents.

Support

HOW LINK CREW ALIGNS

3. Other Adult Relationships: Link Crew (LC) provides the opportunity for the trained coordinators (usually 3-5 adults) as well as adult volunteers to interact with both freshmen and leaders and develop positive relationships at the school.

5. Caring School Climate: The secondary goal of LC, following its primary focus of transitioning freshmen, is to contribute to the overall positive school climate. Because the Link Leaders are selected from a cross section of junior and senior students, the positive experience trickles out to the many social groups around the school.

Empowerment

HOW LINK CREW ALIGNS

7. Community Values Youth: LC is a student-run, student-lead program. The goal is for the adult coordinators to simply provide the structure and the training for the Link Leaders to positively influence both freshmen as well as the rest of the school population. Adults recognize the value in their leaders because it would be literally impossible to run LC without student leaders.

8. Youth as Resources: Ultimately, the strength of the program lies in the strength of the student leaders. The adult coordinators provide the structure for the students to lead. Students are the only renewable resource that schools have. No matter what, a school will have students

9. Service to Others: Unless a school sets up an extrinsic reward system, LC is solely a service to others program and if done well, requires a minimum of an hour a week commitment to the success of the program.

10. Safety: LC contributes to the overall feeling of safety at school as it eliminates any hazing and harassment as well as diminishes the sense of anonymity which contributes to the increase of personal connection which in turns heightens personal safety.

Boundaries and Expectations

HOW LINK CREW ALIGNS

14. Adult Role Models: LC coordinators provide positive, responsible behavior modeling for both the Link Leaders as well as the entire freshman class by investing their time and energy for the success of all students.

15. Positive Peer Influence: Because the Link Leaders are selected from a cross section of junior and senior students, the positive experience trickles out to the many social groups around the school.

16. High Expectations: From the moment a student walks into freshman orientation, he/she is expected not only by the adults, but by older peers to do well and contribute to the overall success of the school, as well as take responsibility for his/her own development.

Constructive Use of Time

HOW LINK CREW ALIGNS

18. Youth Programs: LC provides a place for students to spend time and support others.

Commitment to Learning

HOW LINK CREW ALIGNS

21. Achievement Motivation: Data shows that if a student feels a personal connection to school, he/she will be more successful. LC provides the structure for that personal connection with older peers as well as equal peers.

24. Bonding to School: Connection to school begins with personal connection and then grows from there. LC provides a personal connection for each and every freshman and new student as they enter the school and then, continues support throughout the year.

Positive Values

HOW LINK CREW ALIGNS

26. Caring: Link Leaders are asked to care for all incoming freshmen for the entire year, supporting their academic, personal and social needs.

28. Integrity: Link Leaders are encouraged to stand up for their beliefs in creating a community of care within the school.

30. Responsibility: Each Link Leader is responsible for the support of 10 incoming freshmen and their academic, personal and social success at school.

Social Competencies

HOW LINK CREW ALIGNS

32. Planning and Decision Making: Curricular lessons taught by Link Leaders to freshmen include how to plan and make positive decisions.

33. Interpersonal Competence: Link Leaders develop empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills in interacting with and supporting freshmen; in turn, they are role models for the freshmen in developing these same skills.

34. Cultural Competence: Lessons taught by Link Leaders to freshmen include how to understand different perspectives in regard to race/culture/ethnic backgrounds. Also, students are randomly grouped for the orientation and throughout the year, resulting in heterogeneous grouping and interaction.

35. Resistance Skills: Lessons taught by Link Leaders to freshmen include how to interact with peer pressure and the importance of understanding personal boundaries and values.

36. Peaceful Conflict Resolution: Link Leaders provide the structure for freshmen to resolve conflict positively.

Positive Identity

HOW LINK CREW ALIGNS

39. Sense of Purpose: For the Link Leaders, being responsible for others' wellbeing and success provides a purpose beyond the academic demands of school; for the freshmen, knowing that an older peer cares for their success provides a belief that their life has purpose as well.

40. Positive View of Personal Future: With LC providing ongoing support and the structure for students to care for one another, it gives hope for all involved that the future provides the best for each individual.