



**MY
VOICE**
aspirations survey

Aspirations Portfolio

An interactive tool designed to help high school students foster their aspirations.

www.millionvoice.org

The purpose of the Student Aspirations Portfolio is to help high school students demonstrate their progress on establishing and developing the 8 Conditions in their lives. Students who understand and nurture the 8 Conditions are preparing themselves to reach their hopes and dreams. The portfolio is designed to encourage you to believe in yourself, be actively engaged in your learning, and see the connection between what you learn today and who you want to become tomorrow.

What is an Aspirations Portfolio?

An Aspirations portfolio is an opportunity for you to represent your learning, interests, and growth in a variety of ways. As the designer of the portfolio you choose what class assignments, prompts, and activities best represent your understanding of the 8 Conditions. The portfolio will help you demonstrate your skills and talents in measurable ways.

Why is it important to develop an Aspirations Portfolio?

The Aspirations Portfolio allows you to think about who you are and who you want to be. This tool allows you to be creative and develop a final product that is unique to you. You will also develop your ability to communicate in a variety of forms, use a variety of thinking skills, and help make academic work relevant to your aspirations.

How is the Aspirations Portfolio assessed?

The value of the Aspirations Portfolio as an assessment tool depends upon it being an accurate representation of your classroom-based, independent performance. In addition, it is a comprehensive assessment in that your whole self is represented—academic, personal, social. Unlike standardized tests, the Aspirations Portfolio is valuable because of it is unique for every student. The portfolio represents your journey in understanding your aspirations. Share your final portfolio in a method that honors who you are as a learner. For some the presentation might be oral, while others might choose a web presentation or a small group discussion.

*“Aspirations is the ability to dream about the future,
while being inspired in the present to reach those dreams.”*

--Dr. Quaglia.

What are the 8 Conditions that Make a Difference®?

Belonging is about being a valued member of your school and community while still maintaining your individuality. Your uniqueness and individuality is what makes you a special and important part of the community.

Heroes are the everyday people—teachers, friends, family—in your life who inspire you to excel and to make positive changes in attitudes and lifestyles. They are people who care about you as an individual and help guide you through school and life. This condition is about respecting others and others respecting you.

Sense of Accomplishment is about celebrating the importance of effort, perseverance, and citizenship—along with academic achievement—as signs of your success. This condition is about trying repeatedly rather than giving up.

Fun & Excitement is about you being engaged and interested in school. This condition is about being excited and passionate as well as looking forward to what lies ahead each day.

Curiosity & Creativity is characterized by inquisitiveness, eagerness, a strong desire to learn new or interesting things, and a longing to satisfy the mind with new discoveries. Curiosity triggers you to ask “Why?” while creativity gives you the initiative to ask “Why Not?”

Spirit of Adventure is characterized by your ability to take on positive, healthy challenges at school and home, with family and friends. You can experience this condition when you tackle something new without the fear of failure or success.

Leadership & Responsibility is about making decisions and understanding the consequences of the decision you make. It is about expressing your ideas and opinions. To be a responsible leader you need to take into account not only yourself but also others around you.

Confidence to Take Action is the extent to which you believe in yourself. It is about dreaming about your future while being inspired in the present to reach your dreams.

Beginning your portfolio

Think

The following prompts are designed to help you think about your future hopes and dreams. Respond to at least four prompts for your portfolio.

- What school subjects do you find the most interesting? Why?
- What talents do you have? Think of both academic talents and as well as other skills.
- What careers do you think sound interesting?
- Who do you know that is passionate about their career? Explain.
- What type of music best represents who you are?
- What is your all time favorite book and why?
- If you could visit any place in the world, where would you choose and why?
- What are your limitations? Why do you think these are limitations?

Discuss

Talk with two different teachers about two different questions. Document the questions and responses for your portfolio.

- What do you see as your greatest strength?
- What skill or talent do you think you should work on improving to help yourself academically?
- What book do you recommend all high school students should read? Why?
- What is the one thing you can do now to help yourself in high school and beyond?
- What is something you wish you knew in high school?

Do

Complete at least one activity for your portfolio.

- Design a web page advertising your future profession.
- Write a short story or poem that demonstrates the person you hope to be.
- Create a photo collage representing how you see your future.
- Discover and represent the education and career history of someone you admire.

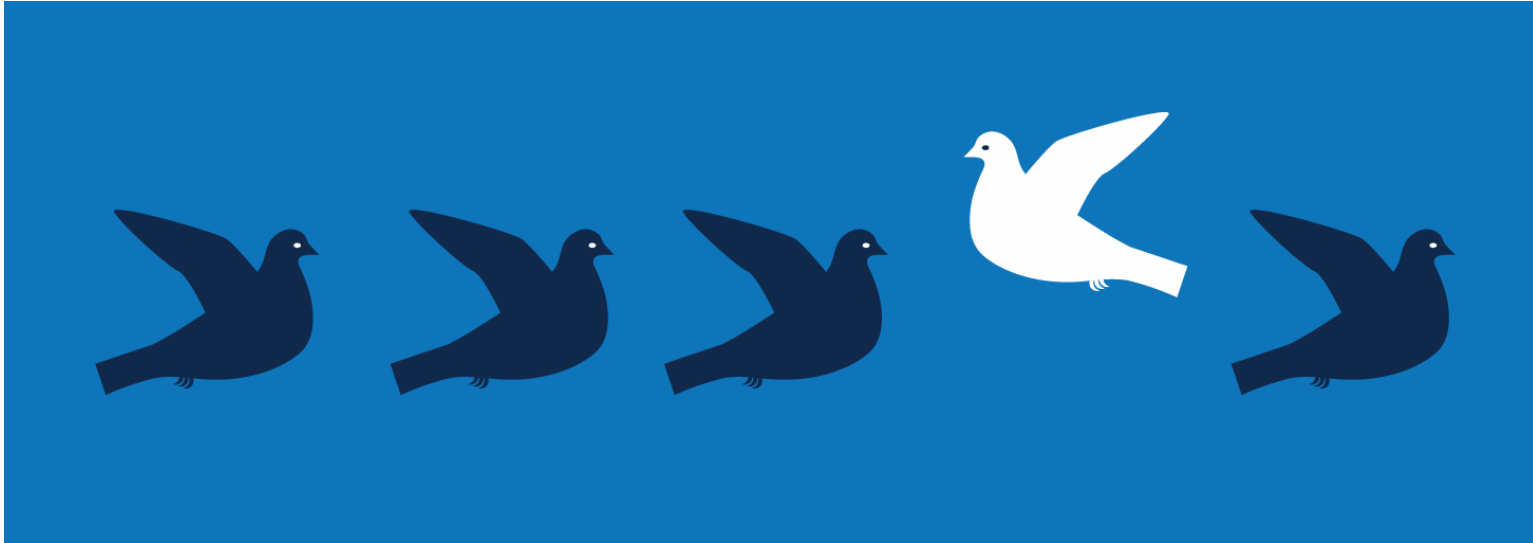
Create a list and/or sketch images of your future **Aspirations** (goals and dreams). The list might be words, sentences, thoughts, or anything to which you can refer throughout this process. Your list may change throughout the school year.

List

Or

Sketch your future **Aspirations** (goals and dreams).

The Aspirations Portfolio – Applying the 8 Conditions to your own learning:
Belonging



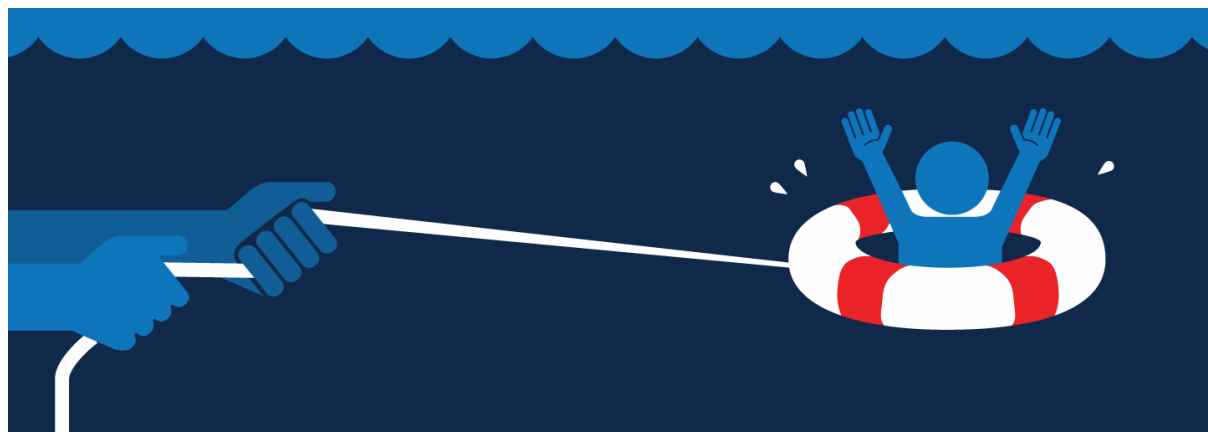
<i>Reflection</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
Respond in a journal or create a portfolio blog.	Provide evidence of your progress in this condition. Below are some examples.
What school and community groups are you part of on a regular basis? What groups relate to your future aspirations? How do you express your individuality in a productive way at school? How are you supportive of students who are different from you?	Provide group photos, example of group projects, or a list of clubs you participate in. Demonstrate the role you play in each organization. Provide an example of individuality in your academic studies. Show what unique contribution you make to your classes. Demonstrate your understanding and valuing other students who are different from you.

To build your Belonging portfolio you can:

- Think and write about how people who are different or outside the mainstream of society have made a difference throughout history.
- Become involved in a school club or organization.
- Create a web page highlighting your uniqueness and how your uniqueness will make a difference in the world.
- Volunteer to help another student feel part of the school community. This might include a student who is not a native English speaker or someone who has special needs.
- Do something to increase school pride. Document your action.
- Take action to address issues of bullying at your school. This might include becoming involved with a school committee, attending sessions aimed at understanding bullying, or organizing an awareness day.
- Attend local community meetings to better understand the importance of community. This might include rotary meetings, local citizens' meetings, voter registration meetings, etc.

The Aspirations Portfolio – Applying the 8 Conditions to your own learning:

Heroes



<i>Reflection</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
Respond in a journal or create a portfolio blog.	Provide evidence of your progress in this condition. Below are some examples.
What adult role models can you currently turn to for support and advice? How can you increase the number of positive role models in your life? What do students and teachers respect about you? How do you show others that you respect them? How are you inspirational to other people?	Provide evidence of your being a positive role model at school or in your community. Provide an adult testimonial relating to how you show respect to adults and your peers. Evidence that shows you increasing your network of supportive adult role models. Examples of school work that demonstrate your ability to support and respect other students.

To build your Heroes portfolio you can:

- Interview someone you think is a Hero. Present your findings so others can learn about this person.
- Develop a scrapbook representing Heroes you read about in the newspaper. Be prepared to explain why you think each person is a Hero.
- Make a plan to build a relationship with at least one new adult at school. The adult might include a teacher, counselor, or coach.
- Ask a teacher or administrator to connect you with a graduate he/she feels would be a good mentor for you. Choose a graduate who is pursuing a post-secondary path that interests you. Document your communication with this graduate.
- Provide evidence of your understanding of the condition of Heroes through your school writing assignments, history assignment or any other class assignment.
- Demonstrate the ways you respect your peers.
- Develop an opportunity to mentor a younger student on a consistent basis.

The Aspirations Portfolio – Applying the 8 Conditions to your own learning:
Sense of Accomplishment

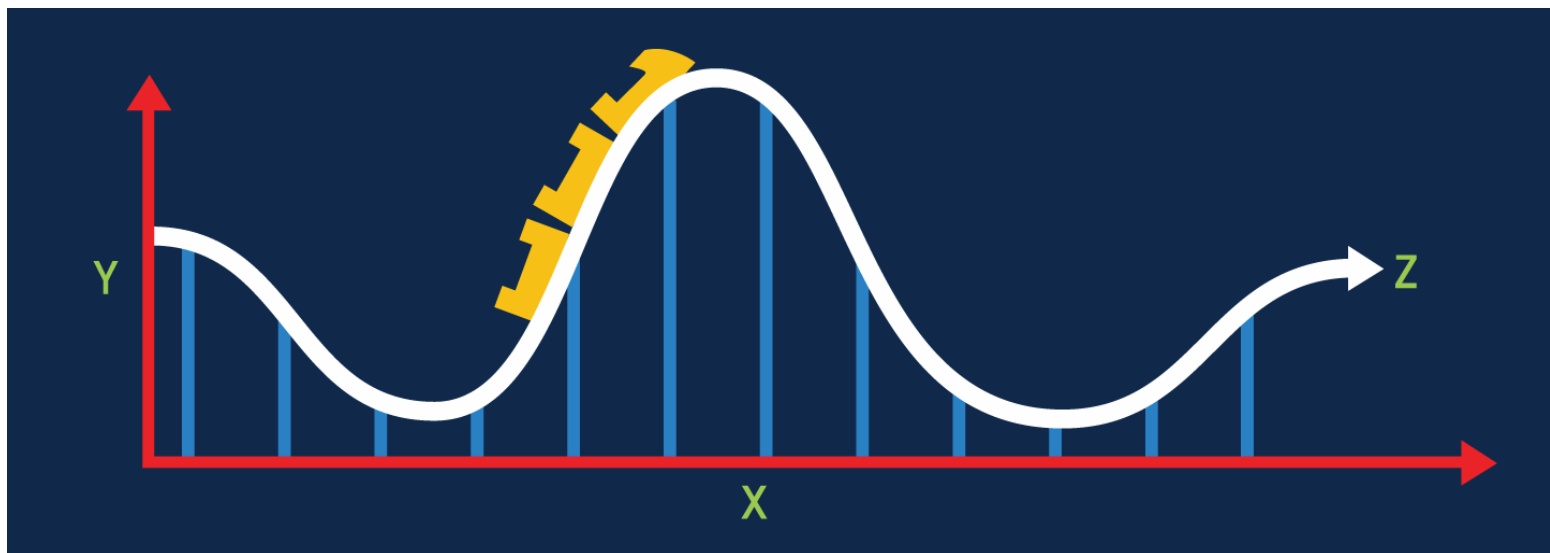


<p><i>Reflection</i></p> <p>Respond in a journal or create a portfolio blog.</p>	<p><i>Evidence</i></p> <p>Provide evidence of your progress in this condition. Below are some examples.</p>
<p>What helps you put forth your best effort?</p> <p>What accomplishments are you proud of achieving?</p> <p>How can you be a better citizen of your school?</p> <p>How do you make yourself persevere when a task seems too challenging?</p>	<p>Provide evidence of work that you revised.</p> <p>Provide an example of persevering through a difficult assignment.</p> <p>Demonstrate the ways you are a good citizen at school or in the community.</p> <p>Show a piece of work that shows your best effort.</p>

To build your Sense of Accomplishment portfolio you can:

- Represent all your accomplishments – academic, athletic, musical, etc.
- Get to know someone you know who perseveres through difficult times. How does he or she constantly persevere?
- Ask to redo a test or assignment you know you could do better. Provide copies of both tests/assignments.
- Become involved in a community service project.
- Find a way to understand your strengths and skills. (Skills inventories are available on line or from guidance counselors).
- Create a file to organize your post secondary goals. For example, to attend college outline the courses you need to take, accomplishments and benchmarks you need to achieve, the organizations you need to join, teacher recommendations, timeline for admissions, etc.
- Attend a ceremony that highlights others accomplishments. Be creative... you might attend a ceremony for new citizens, college graduation, or the retirement recognition of someone who has served the community for many years.

The Aspirations Portfolio – Applying the 8 Conditions to your own learning:
Fun & Excitement

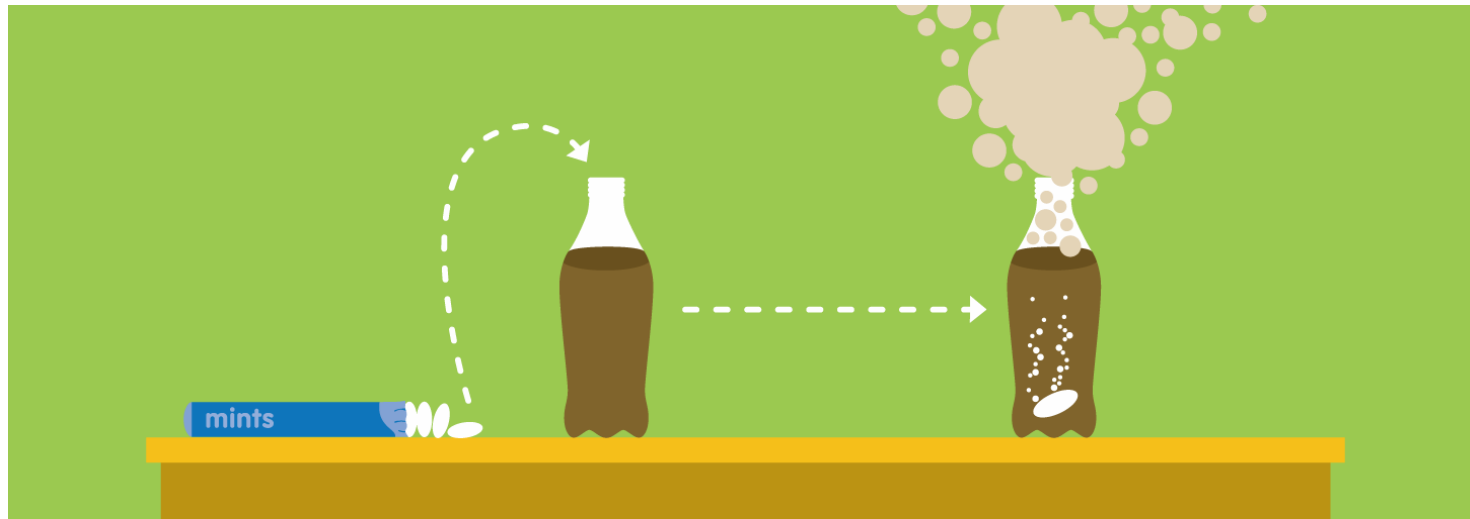


<p><i>Reflection</i></p> <p>Respond in a journal or create a portfolio blog.</p>	<p><i>Evidence</i></p> <p>Provide evidence of your progress in this condition. Below are some examples.</p>
<p>What are you passionate about learning?</p> <p>What subjects do you find engaging?</p> <p>What excites you about your post secondary options? Why?</p> <p>How are you actively learning about possible careers that interest you?</p>	<p>Provide evidence of an academic passion.</p> <p>Demonstrate something you learned just because you found it interesting.</p> <p>Show a piece of school work that you found engaging.</p> <p>Provide evidence of learning outside of the classroom.</p>

To build your Fun & Excitement portfolio you can:

- Represent your enthusiasm and passion for a subject in a creative way.
- Create a visual representation of what you find fun and exciting and why.
- Spend time with someone who is extremely passionate about something. Write about his or her passion – what does it look like, how is it expressed, how did this person become so passionate?
- Design a lesson that covers the same material in a more interesting way than the one typically presented. Present your ideas to the teacher. Include your lesson plan and design in the portfolio.
- Get involved with an activity that others seem to enjoy. Reflect on your level of enjoyment with this activity.
- Learn about something you find interesting that you can't learn in school. Document your learning.
- Create a list of what you think will be fun about your post-secondary choices. Research the truth behind what you think will be fun and what really exists. For example, you might plan on going into the military and think it will be fun to travel. Research whether one does travel or not in the military. Document your learning.

The Aspirations Portfolio – Applying the 8 Conditions to your own learning: Curiosity & Creativity



<i>Reflection</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
Respond in a journal or create a portfolio blog.	Provide evidence of your progress in this condition. Below are some examples.
How do you display your creativity in your schoolwork? What does it mean to you to be a curious learner? How do you question information and search for answers to your questions? What artistic, musical, athletic, and interpersonal skills do you have?	Evidence of your creativity. Provide examples of you displaying curiosity. Provide examples of you learning beyond the required assignment. Show how you use problem solving skills and critical thinking skills in an assignment.

To build your Curiosity & Creativity portfolio you can:

- Redo a non-creative assignment in a creative manner to demonstrate your creativity. Turn this in to your teacher and ask for feedback.
- Spend time researching and understanding the other side to an issue or topic you learned about in school. For example, are there other historical explanations for an event than what you learned in class? Provide a synthesis of your learning.
- Take an art, music, or any typically creative class that your school or community offers.
- Learn all you can about three colleges. Document your learning. After your research, develop several questions you did not have answered. Discover these answers through talking with current students, professors, or alumni.
- Talk with someone in a particularly creative career. Discover their strengths, career path, and seek their advice on pursuing a creative career.
- Create a Wikipedia page about yourself. Ask friends to edit and update your entry.
- Align what you are learning in school with your everyday life. For example, discover how what you are learning in math class is related to your life.

The Aspirations Portfolio – Applying the 8 Conditions to your own learning:
Spirit of Adventure

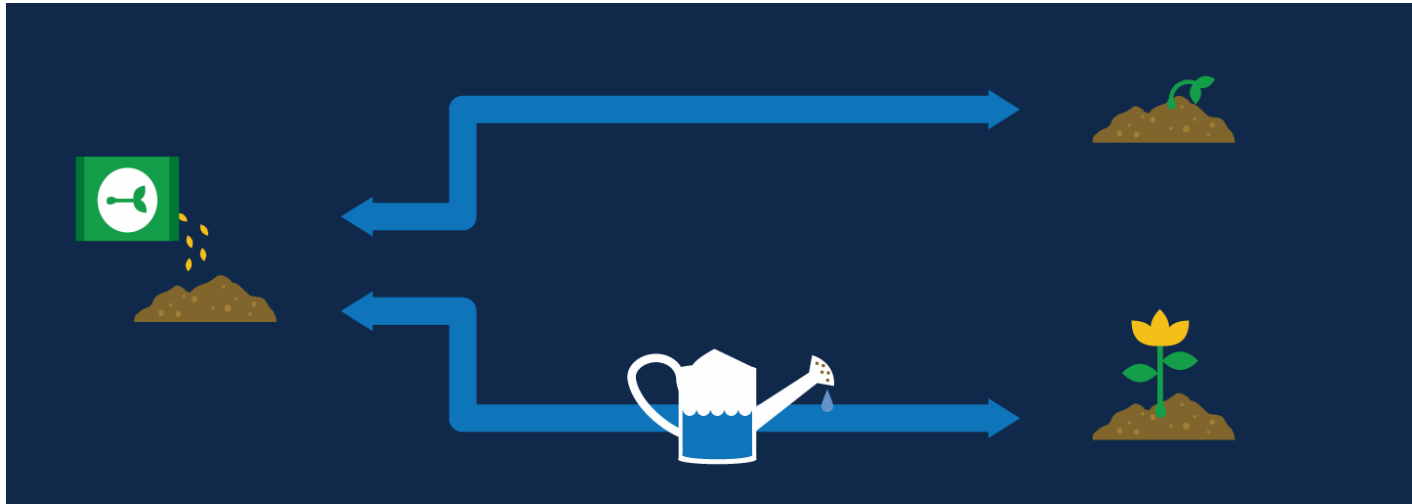


<i>Reflection</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
Respond in a journal or create a portfolio blog.	Provide evidence of your progress in this condition. Below are some examples.
What academic risks have you taken? How do you set goals for yourself? What academic work do you find challenging? What work do you find too easy? How do your friends support you when you push yourself academically?	Provide evidence of challenging yourself at school. Show a goal setting process you use. Demonstrate what you learned from a time you “failed” at a challenging task. Provide a list of your courses of study along with an explanation of how you think each course challenges you.

To build your Spirit of Adventure portfolio you can:

- Create a four year plan that includes the courses you need to take to reach your goals.
- Do challenging extra credit assignments.
- Speak with individual teachers about your personal goals for each class. Work with the teacher to achieve these goals.
- Join a club or organization that is a totally new experience and outside your comfort zone.
- Create a list of academic and co-curricular requirements of four different colleges or other post-secondary schools. Plan how you are going to meet these requirements.
- Speak with a high school graduate about what she wishes she knew when she was in high school. Apply these insights to your current high school career.
- Develop a personal goal and action plan related to your hobbies or interests. Document your journey to achieve this goal.

The Aspirations Portfolio – Applying the 8 Conditions to your own learning:
Leadership & Responsibility



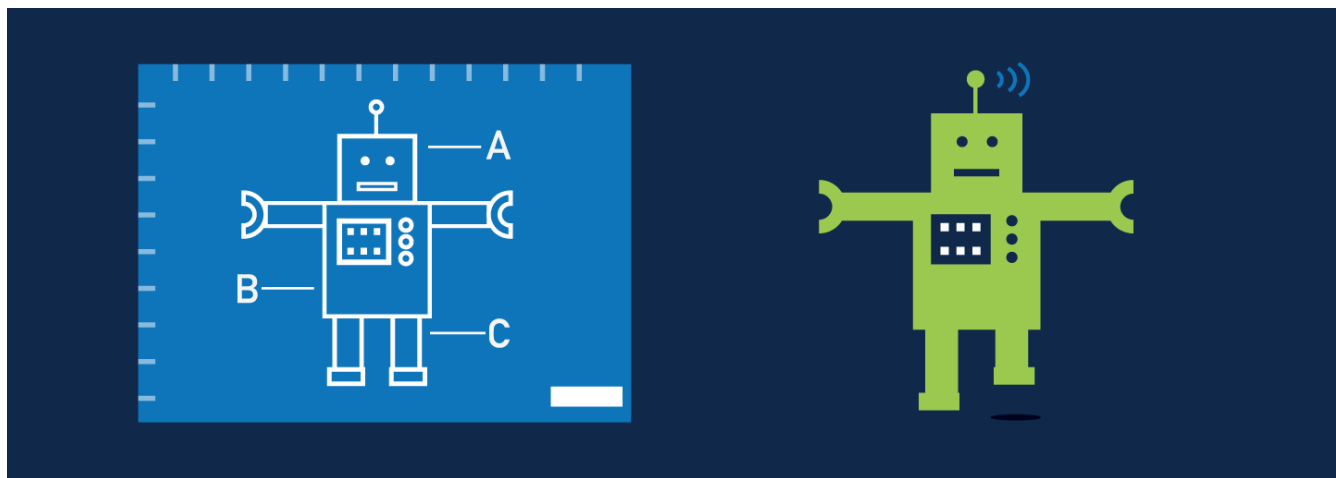
<p><i>Reflection</i></p> <p>Respond in a journal or create a portfolio blog.</p>	<p><i>Evidence</i></p> <p>Provide evidence of your progress in this condition. Below are some examples.</p>
<p>What types of leaders do you admire?</p> <p>How are you responsible for decisions you make?</p> <p>How can you become more involved in your school or community?</p> <p>What are your leadership strengths? Weaknesses?</p>	<p>Demonstrate your involvement in school events and activities.</p> <p>Show a project where you demonstrated leadership.</p> <p>Provide evidence of your leadership growth.</p> <p>Provide letters of recommendation from at least two adults attesting to your character.</p>

To build your Leadership & Responsibility portfolio you can:

- Become involved in a decision-making group at school or in your community.
- Voice your opinion in the school or local newspaper.
- Read a book about someone you think represents a true leader. Explain why this person is a leader.
- Get involved in a school or local community issue. Attend meetings and participate in activities.
- Interview someone in a leadership position. Represent what you learned from the interview.
- Speak at a faculty or school board meeting concerning an issue that is important to students.
- Explore leadership *without* responsibility. What does this look like? When do you think this has been demonstrated?

The Aspirations Portfolio – Applying the 8 Conditions to your own learning:

Confidence to Take Action



<p><i>Reflection</i></p> <p>Respond in a journal or create a portfolio blog.</p>	<p><i>Evidence</i></p> <p>Provide evidence of your progress in this condition. Below are some examples.</p>
<p>What difference do you think you can make in your community, state, country, or the world?</p> <p>What does success mean to you?</p> <p>What excites you about your future?</p> <p>How are you preparing yourself to reach your dreams?</p>	<p>Pieces of writing or other evidence demonstrating your thoughts about your future hopes and dreams.</p> <p>Evidence of research relating to post-secondary options that interest you.</p> <p>Evidence of you supporting others and their future hopes and dreams.</p> <p>Show examples of successes you are proud of achieving.</p>

To build your Confidence to Take Action portfolio you can:

- Job shadow someone in a career that interests you.
- Volunteer at an organization where you can make a difference.
- Become involved in a mentoring organization where you support, guide, and coach a younger student.
- Develop a resume for either college or work. Discuss the resume and what is missing with a career counselor.
- Take action on an issue that is meaningful to you.
- Write two different college essays. Ask at least one adult to edit the essay. (Essay prompts should come from real college applications).
- Demonstrate how your personal purpose helps drive the decisions you make and actions you take.