



**MY  
VOICE**  
*aspirations survey*

**Aspirations Portfolio**

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

[www.millionvoice.org](http://www.millionvoice.org)

The purpose of the Student Aspirations Portfolio is to help middle school students demonstrate their progress with 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.*

## 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 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 about learning, 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, at home, and with family and friends. You 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 decisions 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.

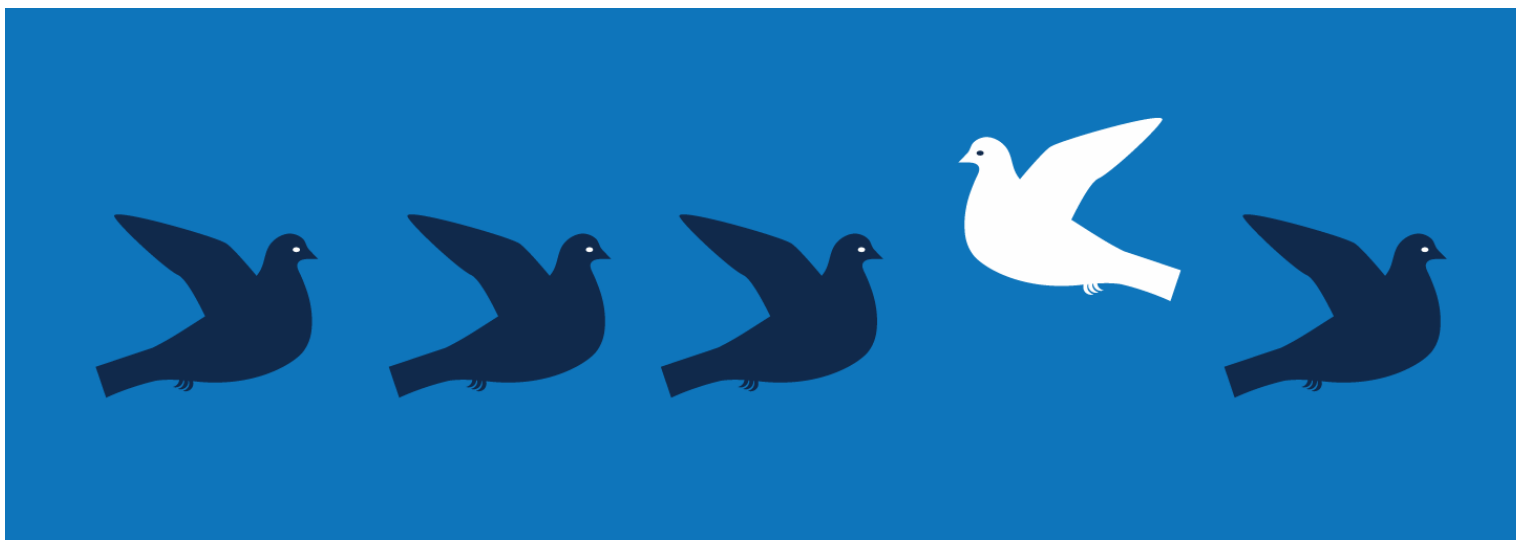
**Confidence to Take Action** is the extent to which you believe in yourself. It is about dreaming about your future, while being inspired in the present to reach your dreams.

Create a list of your **Aspirations** (goals and dreams) for this year and your future. The list might include goals you want to accomplish, activities you want to participate in, jobs you hope to do, or even classes you want to take.

*Draw a picture of something that represents who you are now.*

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

## Belonging



| <i>Reflection</i>   | <i>Samples</i>   |
|---|--|
| Respond in a journal or create a portfolio blog.  | Provide samples of Belonging in your life. Below are some examples.  |
| What clubs or activities do you participate in on a regular basis?<br>What clubs or activities would you like to participate in sometime in the future? | Provide samples of your belonging to a group. This might include group photos, examples of group projects, or a list of clubs to which you belong. |
| How do you express your individuality in a productive way at school?  | Provide a sample of your individuality. This can be anything that represents your uniqueness.  |
| How are you supportive of students who are different from you?  | Include a list of your favorite books, songs, and movies. This list should highlight your interests.   |

*Actions you can take now to support Belonging:*

- Introduce yourself to two adults at school who do not know your name.
- Be a friend to a new student at school.
- Show your school pride by attending after school sporting events or plays.

*To build your Belonging portfolio you can:*

- Become involved in a school club or organization.
- 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 to learn about bullying, or organizing a bullying awareness day.

## **Belonging in Your Life**

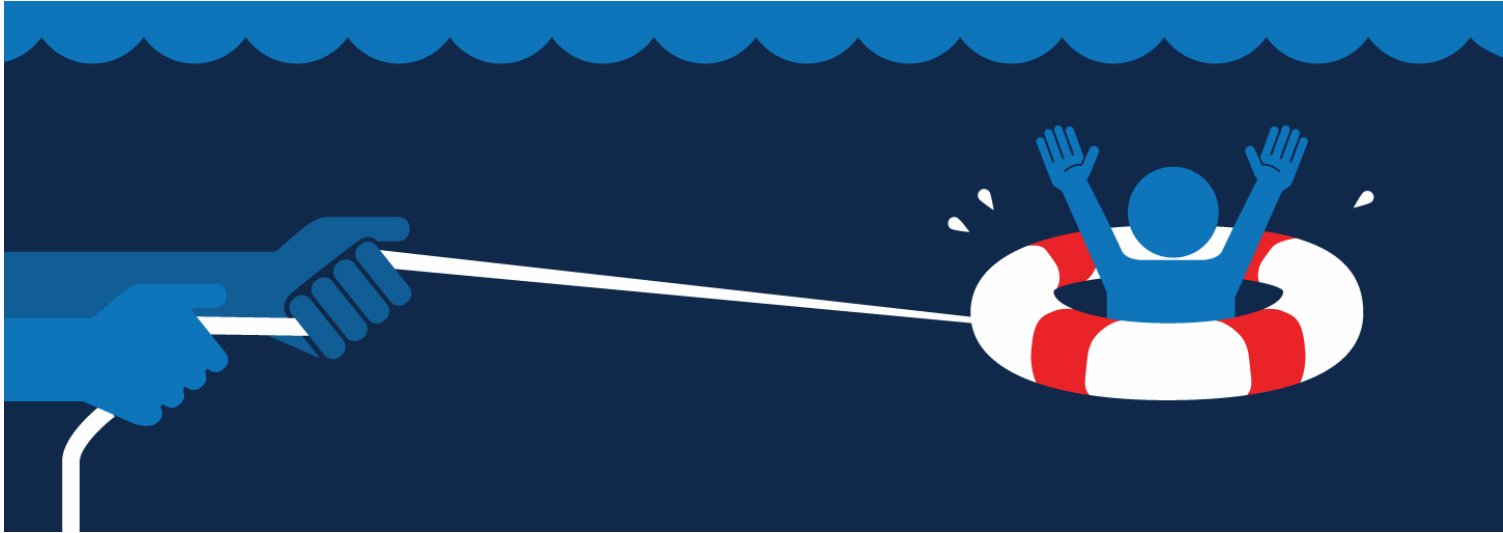
Check all that apply to you.

- I am proud of my school.
- I accept students for who they are.
- I do not bully other students.
- I help other students fit in at school.
- I do not make fun of other students.

Focus on one of the above statements that does not have a check mark. Write a personal action plan to improve in that area. For example, you might choose, "I am proud of my school." What could you do to increase school pride?

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

## Heroes



### *Reflection*

Respond in a journal or create a portfolio blog.

What do students and teachers respect about you?

How do you show others that you respect them?

How are you supportive of other students?

### *Samples*

Provide samples of Heroes in your life. Below are some examples.

Provide evidence of your being a positive role model at school or in your community.

Develop a list of all the supportive adults in your life. Indicate how they support you.

Show an example of a school project where you had to work with other students. Explain at least two ways you showed your classmates respect.

*Actions you can take now to support Heroes:*

- Thank the people in your life who are your everyday Heroes.
- Get to know one adult at school whom you currently do not know. The adult might include a teacher, counselor, or coach. Record at least two things you learned about this person.
- Be respectful to students and adults at your school.

*To build your Heroes portfolio you can:*

- Interview someone you think is a Hero. Write about what you learned.
- Develop a scrapbook of Heroes you read about in the newspaper. Be prepared to explain why you think each person is a Hero.
- Be a mentor to a younger student.

## **Heroes in Your Life**

Check all that apply to you.

- I show respect to teachers at my school.
- I show respect to students at my school.
- I am kind and helpful at school.
- I am a positive role model at my school.
- I show concern if my classmates are absent from school.

Focus on one of the above statements that does not have a check mark. Write a personal action plan to improve in that area. For example, you might choose, "I show respect to students at my school." What can you do to show respect to your classmates?

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



| <i>Reflection</i>                                       | <i>Samples</i>  |
|---|---|
| Respond in a journal or create a portfolio blog.        | Provide samples of Sense of Accomplishment in your life. Below are some examples. |
| What accomplishments are you proud of achieving?        | Show a sample of school work you revised or redid to make it better.              |
| How can you be a better citizen of your school?         | List ways you are a good citizen at school or in the community.                   |
| How do you persevere when a task seems too challenging? | Provide a sample of school work that highlights your best effort.                 |

*Actions you can take now to support Sense of Accomplishment:*

- Do extra homework problems to challenge yourself to learn more.
- Redo an assignment that you did not put much effort into doing.
- How do you put effort into studying? Document the different ways you prepare for a test.

*To build your Sense of Accomplishment portfolio you can:*

- In your portfolio, represent all of your accomplishments – academic, athletic, musical, etc.
- Become involved in a community service project.
- Find ways you can help keep the school clean.

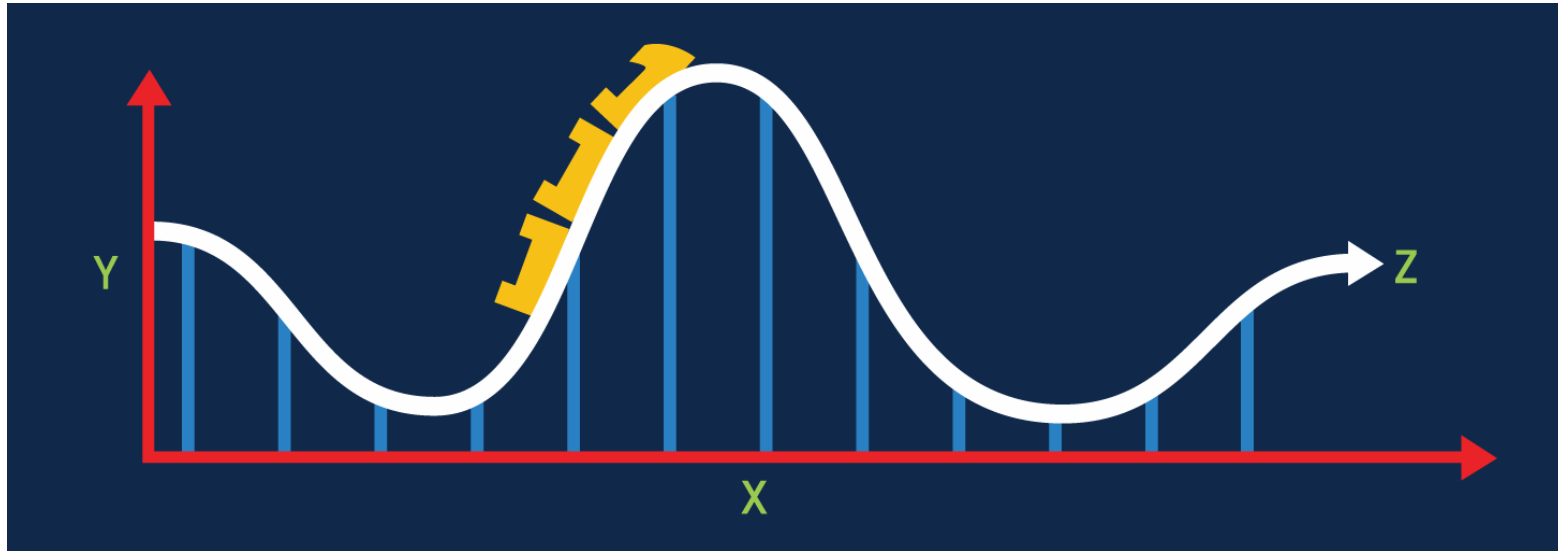
### **Sense of Accomplishment in Your Life**

Check all that apply to you.

- I study for tests.
- I put effort into my homework assignments.
- I care about my school work.
- I don't give up when school work is difficult.
- I try to get good grades.

Focus on one of the above statements that does not have a check mark. Write a personal action plan to improve in that area. For example, you might choose, "I study for tests." Write a plan to study more effectively. You might have to ask an adult for help with your plan.

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



| <i>Reflection</i>   | <i>Samples</i>   |
|---|--|
| <p>Respond in a journal or create a portfolio blog.</p> <p>What do you enjoy learning?</p> <p>Who do you know that is passionate about a hobby, school subject, or other interest? How does he/she show his/her passion?</p> <p>Why is it important to have fun while learning?</p> | <p>Provide samples of Fun &amp; Excitement in your life. Below are some examples.</p> <p>Provide a sample of a school assignment that you enjoyed.</p> <p>Create a list of ten jobs you think seem interesting. What do you think would be interesting about those jobs?</p> <p>Provide evidence of your involvement in safe, fun and exciting activities outside of school.</p> |

*Actions you can take now to support Fun & Excitement:*

- Find adults who have similar interests as you. Talk to them about your interests.
- Develop a list of the subjects you find interesting. What makes these subjects interesting to you?
- Ask your friends to teach you about their hobbies and interests.

*To build your Fun & Excitement portfolio you can:*

- Read a book about someone who has a career you find exciting. Write down what you learned from his or her story.
- Develop three strategies to help you focus when you get bored.
- Learn in-depth about something you find interesting.

## **Fun & Excitement in Your Life**

Check all that apply to you.

I enjoy being at school.

I think learning can be fun.

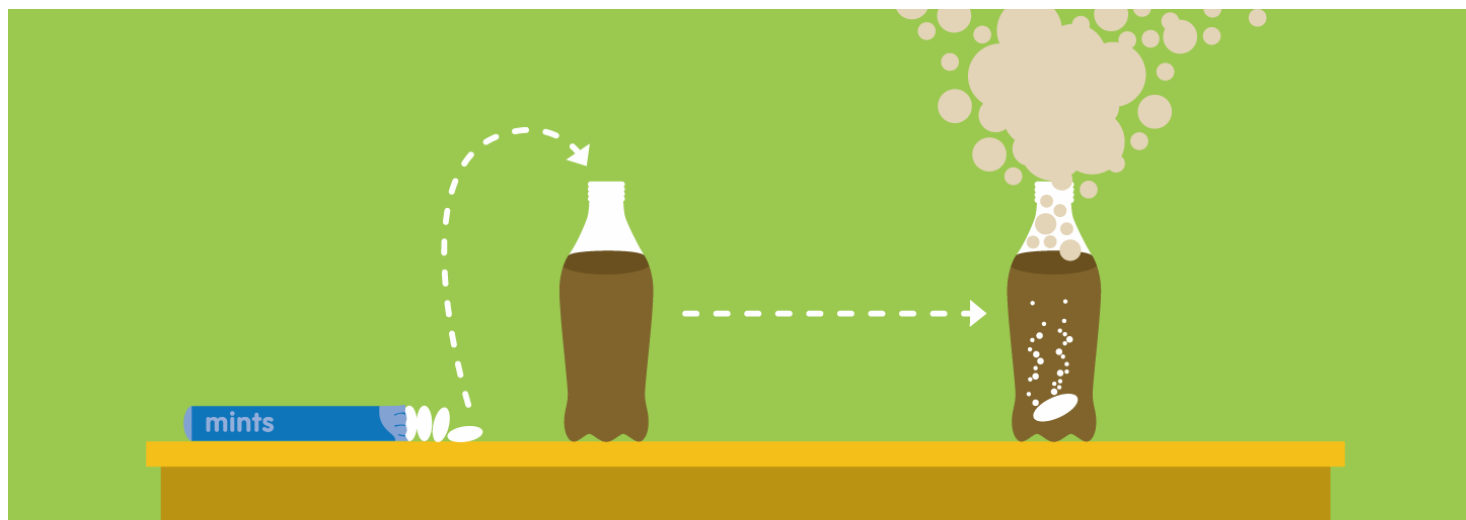
I participate in my classes.

I like to learn outside of school.

I encourage my friends to enjoy school.

Focus on one of the above statements that does not have a check mark. Write a personal action plan to improve in that area. For example, you might choose, "I enjoy being at school." What can you do to enjoy school more?

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



|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><i>Reflection</i></p> <p>Respond in a journal or create a portfolio blog.</p>  | <p><i>Samples</i></p> <p>Provide samples of Curiosity &amp; Creativity in your life. Below are some examples.</p>  |
| <p>What are you curious about?</p> <p>How do you find answers to your questions?</p> <p>How do you demonstrate your creativity?</p> | <p>Include an example of your creativity. This might include artwork, a poem, song or webpage you developed.</p> <p>Show an example of your problem solving skills.</p> <p>Create a list of questions you have about life in high school. Find different high school students and teachers to answer your questions.</p> |

*Actions you can take now to support Curiosity & Creativity:*

- Ask questions and seek answers.
- Paint, draw, act, sing, and challenge yourself to think creatively.
- Write stories, poems, and songs to allow your creative side to grow.

*To build your Curiosity & Creativity portfolio you can:*

- Work on a group project with someone who learns differently than you.
- Spend time in your school library. Read books on unusual and interesting topics.
- Join a school club that involves music or drama.

## **Curiosity & Creativity in Your Life**

Check all that apply to you.

I ask questions in class.

I like to learn new things.

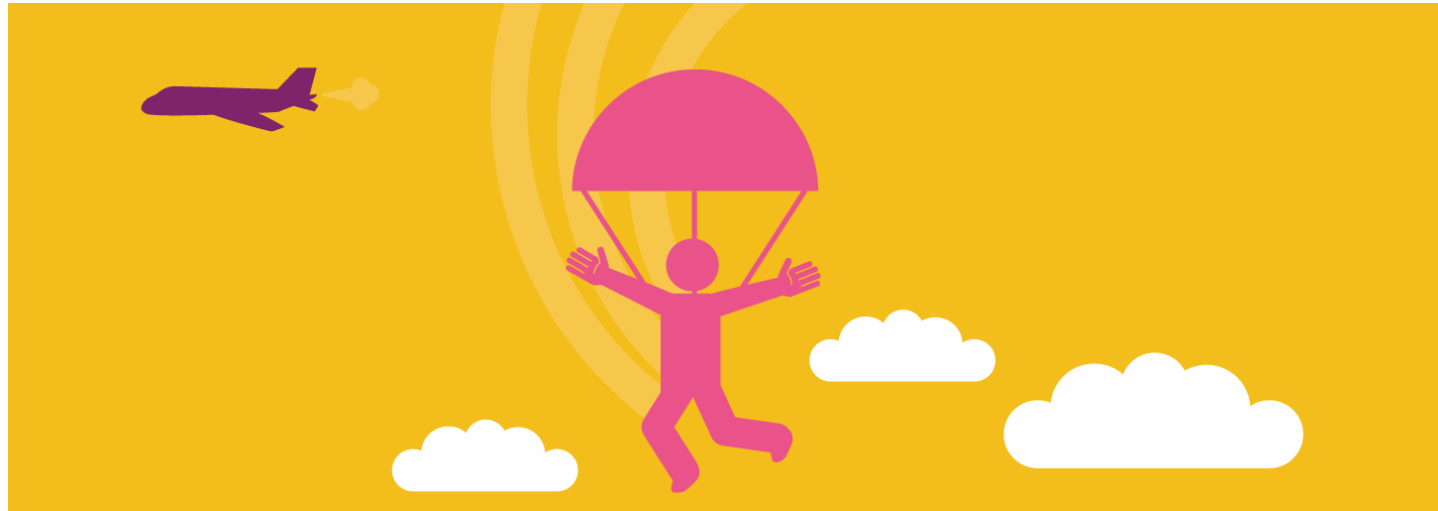
I express myself in various ways.

I surround myself with all different people.

I wonder about many things.

Focus on one of the above statements that does not have a check mark. Write a personal action plan to improve in that area. For example, you might choose, "I surround myself with many different people." What can you do to surround yourself with people who are different from you?

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



| <i>Reflection</i><br>Respond in a journal or create a portfolio blog.  | <i>Samples</i><br>Provide samples of Spirit of Adventure in your life. Below are some examples.  |
|--|--|
| <p>How do you challenge yourself at school?</p> <p>How do you support your friends who want to do well in school?</p> <p>What types of goals do you have for yourself?</p> | <p>Show an example of a goal you set for yourself and describe how you achieved this goal.</p> <p>Include an example of a time you challenged yourself at school instead of taking the easy way out.</p> <p>Provide a list of at least ten challenges you would like to do someday. The challenges might include: going to college, learning to drive, or parachuting.</p> |

*Actions you can take now to support Spirit of Adventure:*

- Think about and learn from your mistakes.
- Do extra credit assignments just to learn more and challenge yourself.
- Be proud of your school's successes and support your friends when they are successful at school.

*To build your Spirit of Adventure portfolio you can:*

- Do something that you think sounds hard to do. This might include: speaking in front of others, singing in public, trying out for a sports team.
- Choice courses and assignments that challenge you.
- Write a list of what you struggle with academically. Then think of how you can make these challenges easier for yourself.

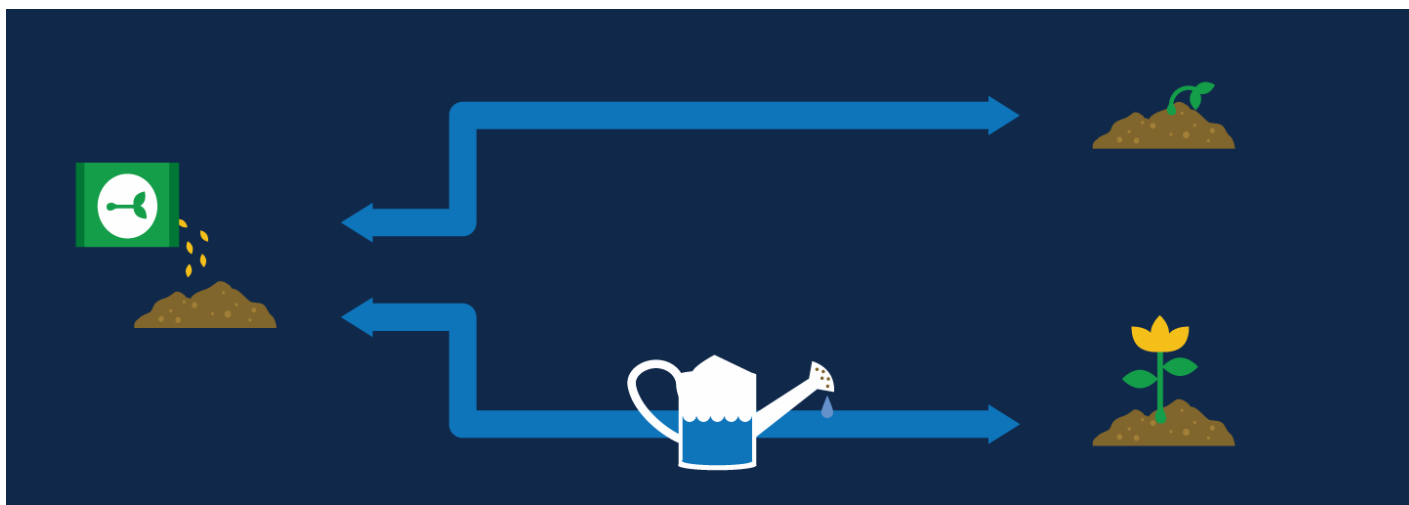
## **Spirit of Adventure in Your Life**

Check all that apply to you.

- I tell my friends when I do well in school.
- I push myself to do my best at school.
- I believe I can be successful.
- I am willing to try something, even if I might fail.
- I think it is important to do well in school.

Focus on one of the above statements that does not have a check mark. Write a personal action plan to improve in that area. For example, you might choose, "I push myself to do my best at school." What can you do to push yourself to do better at school?

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



| <i>Reflection</i>   | <i>Samples</i>  |
|---|---|
| <p>Respond in a journal or create a portfolio blog.</p> <p>How are you a leader at school?</p> <p>How do you take responsibility for your own actions and decisions?</p> <p>Who are a few leaders you admire? Why do you admire them?</p> | <p>Provide samples of Leadership &amp; Responsibility in your life. Below are some examples.</p> <p>Provide an example of a time you showed leadership skills.</p> <p>Provide two letters from adults at school describing how you work successfully with others.</p> <p>Keep a diary for a month recording important decisions you make. Write about how you made each decision and what the consequence of each good and poor decision was.</p> |

*Actions you can take now to support Leadership & Responsibility:*

- Talk with your school principal about issues that concern you and your classmates.
- Voice your opinion in class.
- Develop a system which helps you become more responsible for school and homework assignments.

*To build your Leadership & Responsibility portfolio you can:*

- Join a school or community group and become involved in making decisions with that group.
- Assume a leadership role at school. This does not have to be an elected position.
- Read a book about a positive leader. What do you admire about this person?

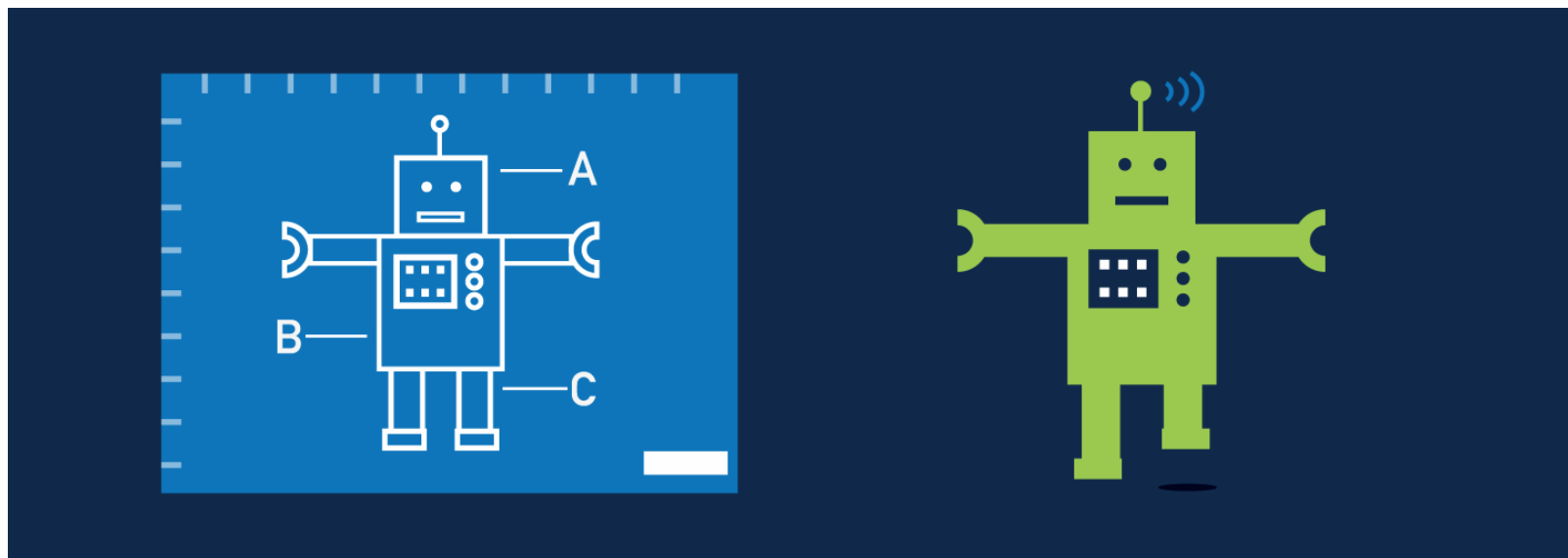
## **Leadership & Responsibility in Your Life**

Check about all that apply to you.

- I see myself as a leader.
- I am responsible for my actions.
- I think about how my decisions affect others.
- I voice my opinion.
- I make good decisions.

Focus on one of the above statements that does not have a check mark. Write a personal action plan to improve in that area. For example, you might choose, "I voice my opinion." What can you do to share your opinions and ideas on a regular basis?

# 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>Samples</i></p> <p>Provide samples of Confidence to Take Action in your life. Below are some examples.</p>   |
| <p>What are your strengths?</p> <p>How are you involved in issues that matter to you?</p> <p>How are you preparing yourself to reach your dreams?</p> | <p>Write about your hopes and dreams for your future, as well as your plans for making your dreams come true.</p> <p>Provide evidence that shows you have thought about which high school courses you may be interested in taking.</p> <p>Show examples of successes you are proud of achieving.</p> |

*Actions you can take now to support Confidence to Take Action:*

- Surround yourself with positive people who have hopes and dreams for their futures.
- Think about how each of your courses might help you in your future.
- Seek out adults who can support and guide you as you work toward achieving your dreams.

*To build your Confidence to Take Action portfolio you can:*

- Learn about possible choices after high school. List these choices and explain why each option might be good for you.
- Write about someone you know who is successful. What makes him or her successful?
- Think of a goal you would like to accomplish, but have not yet to put much effort into achieving. Decide how you can begin working toward this goal, and get started!

## **Confidence to Take Action in Your Life**

Check all that apply to you.

- I think about my future.
- I set high goals for myself.
- I have many skills and talents.
- I work hard to reach my goals.
- I get involved in issues that are important to me.

Focus on one of the above statements that does not have a check mark. Write a personal action plan to improve in that area. For example, you might choose, "I get involved in issues that are important to me." What can you do to get more involved in school and your community?