

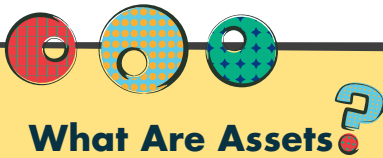


IDEAS for Educators

42 Ready-to-Use Newsletters for School Success

28. INTEGRITY

Young person acts on convictions and stands up for his or her beliefs.



What Are Assets?

Assets are 40 values, experiences, and qualities that help kids succeed.

Integrity is one of six positive-values assets.

68% of youth surveyed have this asset in their lives.*

*Based on Search Institute surveys of 148,189 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States in 2003.

- Watch for moments when students demonstrate integrity, and encourage them.
- Be attuned to conflicts between people with differing convictions.
- Respect students' unique values.
- Help students find out what's important to them.

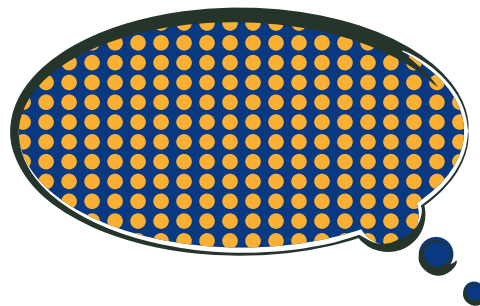
Nurturing Your Students' Integrity

One of the most fragile moments in a student's life is the first time she stands up for her beliefs. It can be a moment of empowerment if her actions are well received, or a moment of crushing defeat if they're not. While it's certainly not our job to

design and oversee these moments, we can promote personal conviction and integrity by creating a school-wide philosophy that allows students to stand up for what they believe in.

As a staff and as individuals we need to articulate what values are, why they are important, and how to reasonably protect them. We can put forth a clear policy and stand by it, let students know they are respected, and show them how to act respectfully toward others.

- Write a definition for integrity and post it clearly around the school.
- Post simple rules for behavior that protect all students' rights.
- Teach conflict resolution so that students feel that they can engage in discussions without fear of repercussion.



- ⦿ As a staff, make sure everyone practices active listening skills to clearly hear student's intentions and minimize misinterpretation.
- ⦿ Make sure students understand they must also respect adults' values and beliefs.

When we consider that our most important work as teachers is to help children become the best adults they can be, we realize just how important integrity is. Beyond any content they learn in your classroom, if your students learn to be people of integrity, you have unequivocally succeeded as a teacher.

Respecting Your Own Integrity

- ⦿ What are your core convictions about being a teacher?
- ⦿ Do you stand up for yourself and others when these convictions are not recognized?
- ⦿ Do you give and receive candid feedback with colleagues and administrators?
- ⦿ Do you voice your opinions and beliefs even if they might run counter to those of your colleagues or your school?

Unlike some school issues that you probably just need to deal with or work through, a conflict

that challenges your integrity is not something you can tolerate for long. When your integrity is at stake, complacency isn't an option.

This week, think and act purposefully in defense of integrity, both for yourself and for your colleagues.

Increase practices that align with your integrity:

- ⦿ Which colleagues share your convictions and beliefs?
- ⦿ What areas of school policy align with your values, and how can you take them further?
- ⦿ What content do you teach that reflects your personal values?

Decrease practices that are in discord with your values:

- ⦿ What practices challenge your values, and how would you specifically propose to remedy the situation? Before advocating for change, have a plan in mind for improvement.
- ⦿ Which relationships challenge your integrity, and how might you reach accord with those people so you feel more aligned with your own values?

