


Premises:

1. All students have the opportunity to explore interests, abilities, values and goals with a certified school counselor.
2. All students have freedom of postsecondary training and career choice.
3. Career development engages students, parents and community partners.
4. Career development is a lifelong process beginning at pre-K.
5. Students have the right to change their career aspirations and goals at any time.
6. Career conversations are primarily strength-based.

Instructions: Determine the student's needs based on the corresponding ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors. Some students may need to address each Mindset & Behavior standard throughout the years, while others may only need to focus on a few. Adapt these questions to meet individual students' needs.

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors	Questions/Parents	Questions/Community	Questions and Prompts/Students
MINDSETS			
Belief in development of whole self, including a healthy balance of mental, social/emotional and physical well-being (M 1.)	1. As you look over the last few months, what has your child accomplished that has been a real highlight? 2. What challenges or struggles have you observed your child facing? 3. As you think about post-high-school life for your child what skills might he/she still need to develop in order to be successful?	1. How would you characterize the quality of life (physical and mental health) of our community? 2. If our students were at their best, how would our community be different (physically, socially and emotionally)? 3. What kinds of programs/services/resources would you like to provide in partnership with our school/district to help our students be their best?	1. Tell me about a time you felt proud of something you accomplished in the last few months. 2. What has gotten in your way of these accomplishments in the past? 3. What do you tell yourself when an assignment or activity is hard? 4. What activities or places make you feel safe and valued? Why? 5. Are there community activities in which you might enjoy being involved? (Or) In what community activities do you currently participate? 6. How could your involvement change how you think about your life after high school?
Self-confidence in ability to succeed (M 2.)	1. Tell me about your child's level of confidence when faced with a new task. 2. Describe your child's approach to working through a challenging assignment or problem. 3. How motivated is your child to complete schoolwork without being assisted?		1. Tell me about a time you felt proud of something you accomplished at school in the last few months. How did you do it? (Ask student to be specific.) 2. What else would you like to accomplish at school this year? Have you thought about how you are going to make this happen? Would you like to develop a plan?

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors	Questions/Parents	Questions/Community	Questions and Prompts/Students
Sense of belonging in the school environment (M 3.)	1. How would you rate your child's school experience on a scale of 1-10? 2. Why did you give it that number?	1. How would you describe the school's environment? 2. In what ways would you suggest the school's environment could be improved? 3. How could we collaborate with you to improve our school's environment?	1. Tell me about the activities you are involved in during the school day and after school. 2. What is your favorite part of the school day? 3. If you had to rate your school on a scale of 1-10 (1=terrible, 10=amazing), what would you rate it? Why? 4. What would it take for your school to be amazing?
Understanding postsecondary education and lifelong learning are necessary for long-term career success (M 4.)	1. Have you had the opportunity to discuss what types of things your child might do after high school? 2. What post-high-school programs or experiences have you already explored related to your child's career interests? (e.g., two-year colleges, four-year colleges, certificates, Job shadows, internships, summer jobs, straight to work, other)	Community partners might be helpful as guest speakers in classes, at job fairs or on panels. 1. What type of training/education did you receive for your career? 2. How do you stay knowledgeable in your field? 3. Would you be willing to demonstrate something you learned from your training/education that you use frequently?	1. As you consider your career, what types of postsecondary training have you already explored? 2. What concerns or questions came up for you as you explored? 3. To achieve your career goals, how long are you willing to go to college? 4. What does success mean to you when it comes to a career? 5. What do you want your lifestyle to be like after high school? 6. Do your lifestyle expectations match your career and education goals? 7. If not, what adjustments are you willing to make?
Belief in using abilities to their fullest to achieve high-quality results and outcomes (M 5.)	1. Consider the test results and grades your child has received this year. Do you think these tests/grades match your child's actual abilities? Describe why there might be differences. 2. How might we better motivate your child to achieve his/her best quality work?	Teachers: 1. In what ways do you convey results to students in the classroom? 2. How do you personally celebrate progress? 3. How do you celebrate progress with your students? 4. Would you like more information on how to interpret assessment results? 5. How do you think we might use our assessment results to more positively motivate students?	1. Describe a time you felt successful. 2. Describe your strengths. 3. What would other people say are your strengths? 4. When thinking of your future, are there any skills you would like to further develop?

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors	Questions/Parents	Questions/Community	Questions and Prompts/Students
Positive attitude toward work and learning (M 6.)	1. How would you describe your child's enthusiasm for learning? 2. Could you tell me about a task at home or school where your child showed a lot of energy and excitement? 3. What kinds of responsibilities does your child willingly help with at home/how is your child a team player at home? (e.g., helps with laundry, does the dishes, helps with younger siblings, mows the lawn)	1. Do you think students in our community convey positive attitudes toward work? Explain. 2. Do you think students in our community convey positive attitudes toward learning? 3. How would a more positive attitude look? 4. What types of activities during or after the school day might promote a more positive attitude toward working and learning?	1. If you could learn about anything, what topic would you want to learn about and why? 2. If you could create a new class at our school, what would it be? 3. How do you think you will use what you are learning in our school when you begin a career? 4. Think about going to school and having a career. Are they the same thing? Are they different, and if so, how?

BEHAVIOR: LEARNING STRATEGIES

Demonstrate critical-thinking skills to make informed decisions (B-LS 1.)	1. Could you tell me about a time you're your child was faced with a difficulty or challenge and figured out a solution without your help? 2. What resources or tools did your child use to problem solve the situation?	1. Employers cite critical-thinking skills as an important trait when hiring. How do you measure critical-thinking skills in the hiring process? 2. What are some ways you might be willing to collaborate with us to promote critical thinking about real-world issues in our classrooms?	1. Could you tell me about a time this year when you had a big problem you had to solve by yourself? 2. What steps did you use to find a solution? 3. What resources did you use?
Demonstrate creativity (B-LS 2.)	1. Tell me about ways in which your child is creative or imaginative. 2. How do you think creativity helps your child learn?	1. Many employers are looking for employees who can be innovative, out-of-the-box creative thinkers. In what ways does out-of-the-box thinking help your organization work strategically in the community? 2. How might we help students be more creative? 3. Many people think of creativity in terms of arts and humanities. Do you have examples of creativity in STEM that might help us stimulate student interest in STEM fields? 4. How might we do a better job of integrating STEM and art (STEAM) in our school? <i>Note, these won't be useful questions for every community partner.</i>	1. Tell me about something you have created recently. 2. What are some of your hobbies? 3. Let's say I put together a team of students to build a space station. I need people who could design the spacecraft, build it, decorate the inside with art, install computers and fly space shuttles to the space station. Which one would you want? Why?

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors	Questions/Parents	Questions/Community	Questions and Prompts/Students
Use time-management, organizational and study skills (B-LS 3.)	1. Describe your child's approach to studying. 2. How does your child organize materials needed for homework/school?	1. Many employers are looking for employees with excellent organization and time-management (self-initiation) skills. How important is that to your organization? 2. What are some examples of things that might go wrong if individuals in your organization did not have these skills? 3. What are some ways you could demonstrate these skills to students that might help them connect school to the world of work (e.g., a three-minute video that would be shown during a classroom lesson on organization)?	1. Imagine you have homework one night for every class. How would you organize or prepare for that? Your materials? Your time?
Apply self-motivation and self-direction to learning (B-LS 4.)	1. Could you tell me about a time your child was interested in learning something (outside of school) and how he or she went about finding out information on the topic of interest (e.g., dinosaurs)?	1. Self-motivated learning is important because in their careers students will have to be self-initiating. How might we improve self-motivation in middle school students? 2. What does your organization do to inspire self-motivation in youth?	1. At home, are there good or bad consequences for your grades? 2. Should parents or teachers give students something for making good grades? If so, what? 3. Tell me about a time when you wanted to learn about something just because you found it interesting. What was it? How did you learn about it?
Apply media and technology skills (B-LS 5.)	1. Have there been instances where your child struggled to use technology or find media resources for an assignment? 2. Have there been times when using technology to help your child with schoolwork has been a challenge for you?	1. Many employers cite technical skills as helpful for future employees. What types of technical skills do you expect future employees to have? 2. How do you think we can help students be both competent and ethically responsible when using social media and technology? 3. In what ways could your organization partner with us to improve students' technology skills and media-use ethics?	1. What types of social media do you currently use? 2. If you were interviewing for a job today and an employer asked you to describe everything you know about technology in one minute or less, what would you say? 3. Adults sometimes worry about what is happening on social media and how students treat each other. If you were writing a rulebook, what rules would you write for how people should treat each other online?

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors	Questions/Parents	Questions/Community	Questions and Prompts/Students
Set high standards of quality (B-LS 6.)	1. In terms of your child's education, what standards of high quality (or goals) have you set for your child? 2. In terms of your child's future career, what would a high-quality career mean to you?	1. Given that schools are often told to push students to achieve high standards of quality, how would you as a community partner define high standards of quality? 2. What measures of quality do you believe accurately reflect high standards for our students? 3. How might we better prepare our students to meet high standards of quality in their future employment?	1. When it comes to your schoolwork, what expectations do you have for yourself? 2. How do you know if you are doing your best possible work? 3. Does doing your best matter? If so, why?
Identify long- and short-term academic, career and social/emotional goals (B-LS 7.)	1. As you think about your child's future, what academic goals would you like to see him/her achieve this year? 2. What academic future would you ideally like to see for your child (e.g., college degree, training, etc.)?		Note to school counselor/ educator: Consider goal setting with students throughout middle school. 1. Based on your exploration of different career options and career assessments, do you have ideas about future careers? Describe. 2. What are you currently doing that is helping you prepare for your life after high school? 3. What are you not doing that you think would help? 4. I'd like you to set a goal that is specific and challenging but attainable related to your academics. Given your plans after high school, what academic goal would make sense for you? 5. Given your plans after high school, what social goal would make sense for you?

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors	Questions/Parents	Questions/Community	Questions and Prompts/Students
Actively engage in challenging coursework (B-LS 8.)	1. Consider the classes your child is in. How does your child respond when courses become challenging?	1. When students are challenged in courses, we want them to develop perseverance and resilience by working through difficulties. How do you think we might build challenges into courses and support student strengths? 2. In what ways might students benefit from team building, cooperative learning and collaboration skills in working through challenging coursework? 3. What other skills might help them learn to navigate these challenges and build perseverance and resilience?	1. What do you do when a class assignment becomes difficult? 2. How well does your strategy work? Is it something you would like to change? If so, would you like to develop a plan?
Gather evidence and consider multiple perspectives to make informed decisions (B-LS 9.)	1. How does your child go about making important decisions? 2. As you think about your child's future and the importance of the decisions he/she will make in terms of career and college, what types of information would you like to see your child consider in the decision-making process?	1. Students often seek a lot of information in making decisions about careers and college. In what ways might we partner with your organization to bring a unique perspective and information to our students?	1. Think about the last time you made a tough decision. How did you go about making that decision? What information did you use? Did you gather any advice or ask for opinions from anyone? If so, from whom and why? 2. When you are making a decision it is sometimes important to think about who can help you based on the type of decision. If you have a career question, how might you gather information or ask questions? 3. What information would be important to know about a career?
Participate in enrichment and extracurricular activities (B-LS 10.)	1. In what types of afterschool activities is your child involved? 2. In terms of school success and career preparation, how might extracurricular activities help your child develop?	1. Enrichment and extracurricular activities help students develop workplace skills and interpersonal relationships. How might we partner with you to improve enrichment or extracurricular programs for our students? 2. What kinds of programs do we need in our school community?	1. What kinds of things do you enjoy doing after school? On weekends? In the summer? 2. In what types of activities would you like to be involved? 3. How might participating in these kinds of activities prepare you for your life after high school?

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors	Questions/Parents	Questions/Community	Questions and Prompts/Students
BEHAVIOR: SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS			
Demonstrate ability to assume responsibility (B-SMS 1.)	1. Tell me about some ways your child has shown responsibility at home. 2. What responsibilities does your child have beyond schoolwork in terms of daily chores? 3. How often do you need to remind your child of responsibilities to get him/her to do what you ask? 4. What responsibility do you believe your child has as a citizen? 5. What opportunities does your child have to fulfill responsibilities related to community?	1. As students get older, we want to encourage them to take more personal responsibility. From your perspective, how can schools encourage students to take more responsibility? 2. Given that students are citizens, what are some ways students can begin to assume responsibility in our community? 3. How can we partner to provide students with these types of service opportunities?	1. Tell me about some of your responsibilities at home. 2. Who decides what responsibilities you have? 3. What consequences do you have for not meeting your responsibilities? 4. What responsibilities do you have that you created yourself (e.g., maybe you visit an elderly neighbor just to be nice and no one asked you to do so)? 5. What responsibility do you have to your community? 6. What ideas do you have for serving your community?
Demonstrate self-discipline and self-control (B-SMS 2.)	1. Often, students in middle school are learning to take control of their own behavior, and it takes time to develop these skills. How would you describe your child's ability to control his/her emotions? 2. When something upsets your child, what are some ways he/she copes?	1. As you think about the importance of self-control and self-discipline for future workers, what self-discipline or self-control skills do you think middle school students need? 2. Given that skills develop over time, how might we do a better job of promoting these skills in the classroom? 3. What are some ways to promote these skills through enrichment and afterschool programs? 4. How might your organization partner with us to promote these skills?	1. Being in middle school can be tough at times. Some middle school students report feeling frustrated, angry or sad about things that happen at school. These things might be issues with teachers, peers, comments on social media or a variety of other things. Could you tell me how you handle tough emotions such as feeling really sad or very angry? 2. Could you tell me about a time when you felt very angry or very disappointed and you dealt with the situation really well? 3. Why would self-control matter for your future career?

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors	Questions/Parents	Questions/Community	Questions and Prompts/Students
Demonstrate ability to work independently (B-SMS 3.)	1. How often does your child do his/her homework without assistance? 2. When your child requires assistance, what type of assistance does he/she ask for? 3. What are some things your child enjoys doing by himself/herself?	1. Employers sometimes cite a desire for workers to be independent. How do we help foster independence in middle school students? 2. Can you think of some times when we do not want students to work independently? 3. Can you think of some ways your organization needs employees to be both independent and interdependent in their work? 4. How could we effectively help teachers think of ways to promote independence and interdependence in classrooms?	1. Tell me about the last class assignment you did on your own with no help at all. 2. Which do you prefer, working on your own or with others? 3. What is one thing you enjoy doing alone? 4. Think of your future career goal. Will you be working alone or with others? Both?
Demonstrate ability to delay immediate gratification for long-term rewards (B-SMS 4.)	1. How long is your child willing to wait to be rewarded for a task? 2. When your child thinks about his/her future, how many years is your child willing to dedicate to education and training after high school?		1. Tell me about a time you wanted something and had to wait a long time for it. 2. When you think about going to college or other options after high school, how do you feel about waiting a long time for your degree? 3. What if you chose a career that requires you to go to college for a really long time, such as eight years beyond high school. How would you feel about that? 4. What if you chose a career requiring you to develop a lot of experience and skill but not college. How do you feel about becoming an expert at a trade?

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors	Questions/Parents	Questions/Community	Questions and Prompts/Students
Demonstrate perseverance to achieve long- and short-term goals (B-SMS 5.)	1. Could you give me an example of a time your child set a goal and stuck with it until he/she accomplished it? 2. Setting goals and sticking to them can be hard for middle schoolers. What are some ways you would like to see us celebrate your child accomplishments?	1. Achieving long-term and short-term goals is important, and one way to do it is by persevering through difficulties. What are some ways we can remind kids to persevere and stick to their goals in the school environment? 2. How can community partners remind students school is a goal worth achieving and that sticking to their goals matters? 3. How can we work together to celebrate with students and their families when they accomplish goals?	1. Tell me about a time you set a goal for yourself and stuck to it. 2. What makes it difficult to stick with goals? 3. What helps you stick with your goals? 4. In what ways might sticking to goals help you in college? In your future career?
Demonstrate ability to overcome barriers to learning (B-SMS 6.)	1. Tell me about a time your child had difficulty learning something. 2. What helped your child to overcome this difficulty?	1. Sometimes middle school students aren't successful because they haven't mastered the ability to overcome barriers to learning. What are some barriers to learning you see in our school community? 2. How might we reduce barriers to student learning? 3. What strategies do our students need to learn to overcome barriers to learning? 4. How might we work together to help students and their parents recognize barriers to learning and overcome them?	1. Describe a time you had difficulty learning something in one of your classes. How did you overcome the problem? 2. What strategies do you use when you have an assignment you don't understand?

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors	Questions/Parents	Questions/Community	Questions and Prompts/Students
Demonstrate effective coping skills when faced with a problem (B-SMS 7.)	1. How does your child react when faced with stress or a problem? 2. Middle school students are sometimes known for their strong emotions. In what ways is your child typical in how he/she reacts to problems, and in what ways is he/she unique?	1. Students face a lot of stress today. Learning to cope with this stress is an important skill. What types of coping strategies (positive or negative) have you seen students in our community using? 2. What strategies would you like to see them using more often? 3. How might we do a better job teaching students how to cope? 4. How can our school work with your organization to promote positive student coping?	1. Think about a time when you did not handle a problem so well. What do you wish you had done better? 2. What did you learn from that experience that you have used moving forward?
Demonstrate the ability to balance school, home and community activities (B-SMS 8.)	1. Sometimes students are asked to do a lot at home, school and in their community. As you think about your child, how are the demands on his/her time? Too much? Too little? 2. How do you think learning to manage all of this is preparing your child for college or a career?	1. Families and students are asked to balance a lot between school, home and the community. How well are families balancing all of these things? 2. How does your organization support families and students in ways that might help them prioritize and balance all of these activities? 3. How might we partner with you to provide support for families and students in achieving this balance? 4. How might we better convey messages about learning to balance these activities as part of future career and college development?	1. If you had more time in your schedule, what would you like to spend it on? 2. As you think about how you spend your time, would you consider managing your time differently if it meant doing more of what you enjoy or find meaningful? 3. Which of the following statements better describes you? • There just isn't enough time in the day to do everything I want to do. • I have no idea where my time goes.

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors	Questions/Parents	Questions/Community	Questions and Prompts/Students
Demonstrate personal safety skills (B-SMS 9.)	1. Students all vary in the amount of risk or caution they will take. When you think about your child and his/her personal safety, how risky or cautious would you say he/she is?	1. There are many personal safety skills students need to develop. What issues of personal safety do you think our students need to be prepared to address? 2. How might we know if our students are truly prepared to deal with safety situations (consider active shooter drills, personal safety workshops, Internet safety training)? 3. How might we work with your organization to prepare students and their families for the safety issues facing students in our community?	1. Think about your safety here at school. What kinds of things might happen that could make you or other students feel unsafe? 2. Imagine you were giving a workshop to students who were new to our school. The workshop is about how to be safe when using the Internet. What personal information would you tell students not to share when using the Internet? What other tips would you give them? 3. If you were at school and found a backpack with a gun in it, what would you do?
Demonstrate ability to manage transitions and ability to adapt to changing situations and responsibilities (B-SMS 10.)	1. Consider a time when your child had to adapt to a changing situation. How did he/she respond?	1. Many families and students have to cope with transitions and change. What are some strategies that help families and children in our community cope with change? 2. What types of support does your agency provide for students and family managing transitions? 3. How can we do a better job linking families with your resources?	1. Think about a change you went through recently either at home or school. How did you adapt to that change? 2. What did you do to adjust to the change? 3. Who helped you get through the change? 4. What did you learn from that experience?

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors	Questions/Parents	Questions/Community	Questions and Prompts/Students
BEHAVIOR: SOCIAL SKILLS			
Use effective oral and written communication skills and listening skills (B-SS 1.)	1. Think of your child and his/her communication with others. Think of how your child speaks, writes, listens. If you had to pick one of these areas as a strength (speaking, writing, listening) which would it be, and why? 2. How might that strength help your child in his/her future career?	1. Many employers want to hire individuals who are effective communicators. What does effective communication mean to you? 2. How do you assess effective communication in the hiring process? 3. What activities or programs would your organization be willing to offer to help us improve student communication strategies (e.g., poster fair judges, mock interviewing)?	1. Think about how you speak with, write to and listen to others. Which of those is your strength? 2. How do you know when you are doing a good job listening to others? 3. Why might speaking, writing and listening be important for your future career goals?
Create positive and supportive relationships with other students (B-SS 2.)	1. How would you describe your child's relationships with peers? 2. What concerns do you have about peers and their influence on your child?	1. Promoting positive peer relationships is important to students' successful overall development. How would you characterize the peer relationships of youth in our community? 2. How could we build positive rapport and trust among youth? 3. How might we decrease relational aggression, bullying and interpersonal violence? 4. How will making these relationships positive help promote career and college readiness?	1. How would you describe your relationships with other students? 2. Have you ever wished other students treated you differently? How so? 3. How do you show support and kindness to other students?
Create relationships with adults that support success (B-SS 3.)	1. Could you tell me about an adult, either at school or not, with whom your child has developed a positive connection?	1. Positive adults who interact with youth to support career and college readiness are an important part of the school program. How do adults in your organization or program interact with youth in our school community? 2. In what ways can we create positive relationships between students at our school and in your organization to promote career and college success?	1. As you think about your future career, what adults might help you think about or reach your future career goals? 2. Considering the adults you know, who might be able to provide support or encouragement to you as you think about options after high school?

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors	Questions/Parents	Questions/Community	Questions and Prompts/Students
Demonstrate empathy (B-SS 4.)	1. Middle school is a time when students really start to understand the perspective of others. Can you tell me about a time when your child showed worry or concern for someone who was suffering/struggling?	1. Empathy is an important social skill for our students to demonstrate. What factors help students develop empathy? 2. What are some barriers to developing empathy? 3. What are some activities or programs hosted by your organization that help students develop socially including empathy and concern for others? 4. How can we promote empathy in classrooms?	1. Tell me about a time when you saw someone in a bad situation? How did you feel, and what did you do? 2. What responsibility do you have for helping others?
Demonstrate ethical decision-making and social responsibility (B-SS 5.)		1. How do ethics play a role in your organization? 2. What do you look for in regard to ethical decision-making in a potential employee? 3. Can you think anything you would like to see us teach our students about ethical decision-making? 4. Do you have any activities/resources that could help our students develop ethical decision-making?	1. Honesty and trustworthiness are important in a work setting. Can you tell me about a time when you made a decision to be honest and trustworthy? How did you feel? 2. Why might employers want to work with people who are honest and trustworthy?
Use effective collaboration and cooperation skills (B-SS 6.)	1. Could you describe a project or activity your child worked on (in or out of school) that required collaboration with others? 2. What was your child's response to the project? Highlights? Challenges?		1. What types of group activities do you enjoy doing? 2. Why might group work be important in your future career? 3. Can you give an example of how groups work together in career settings (e.g., construction site, surgical teams, marketing/advertising groups)?
Use leadership and teamwork skills to work effectively in diverse teams (B-SS 7.)	1. Could you describe a time your child was in the role of leader? 2. How did he/she adapt to that role? 3. How would you describe the opportunities your child has had to work with individuals from other ethnicities, religions, race groups?		1. Could you describe a time you got to lead a group or team? What was that like? 2. America is diverse. There are people of many races, religions and ethnicities, and you will likely have the opportunity in your life to work with many different kinds of people. What might you learn from working with people who are different from you?

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors	Questions/Parents	Questions/Community	Questions and Prompts/Students
Demonstrate advocacy skills and ability to assert self when necessary (B-SS 8.)	1. Could you tell me about a time your child was assertive for himself/herself or someone else?		1. Think of a time when you felt someone was being treated unjustly. How did you handle it? 2. What is the best way to communicate your concerns so other people can listen and understand your perspective?
Demonstrate social maturity and behaviors appropriate to the situation and environment (B-SS 9.)		1. What are some common inappropriate behaviors you see on the job?	1. What is a common inappropriate behavior you see other students doing? 2. How do you think this will work for them in the future if they keep doing the behavior?

The Career Conversations provide a guide for working with middle and high school students, parents and community members to address the ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success: K-12 College- and Career-Readiness Standards for Every Student. The Career Conversations questions are based on ecosystems theory, counseling theory and an extensive review of counseling and career counseling literature. The questions can be used to work with individuals and groups of students, parents and community members. The Career Conversations were developed by ASCA for the Colorado Department of Education.



COLORADO
Department of Education