01

Tenets of strategic plan
What problem are we trying to solve?

Problem statement

Too many students don’t successfully pursue education or skills training after high school limiting their opportunities for long term success.

ASA believes

Making kids aware of their education and career options earlier in life will help them graduate with a plan.
Steps we have undertaken to develop a strategic plan

ASA took the following steps to develop a strategic plan that will equip it to lead the effort to close the credentials gap by making students aware of career and post-secondary options:

- Decision made to transition FFELP operations and begin wind-down of Salt
- Began business transformation related activities
- New mission “A path for every student. A plan for every future.” created
- Upgraded Research & Analytics team with demonstrated expertise in Middle School curriculum design
- New, mission-aligned initiatives launched to test what works and to learn
- Leadership conducted strategic planning meetings to demonstrate new approach to impact
Our mission

American Student Assistance® (ASA) is committed to helping kids know themselves, know their options, and make informed choices to achieve their education and career goals.
Establish ASA as the driver of long-term, systemic change in post-secondary and career planning

ASA has an aspirational target to impact 50% of the 30 million 6th–12th graders by 2023 on the path towards a post-secondary and career plan.

**Student impact target**

1. Based on NCES projections for students in 2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Impact Target</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6th-8th</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9th-12th</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15.0</td>
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**Targets**

1. **Impact 50% of 6th-12th graders at levels 1-4**
2. **Establish ASA as the thought leader for post-secondary and career pathways with parents, K-16 education, and governments**
3. **Remain self-sustaining**
Key pillars of our strategy

ASA will achieve its mission via initiatives that help students chart their direction for post-secondary and career success. We want every student to:

**Explore**
- **Description:** Activities that promote self-awareness and Exploration
- **Challenge addressed:** Most middle school students have limited knowledge of personal characteristics, interests, aptitudes, and skills and how they relate to post-secondary and career options
- **Outcome:** Students should “know themselves”

**Experiment**
- **Description:** Activities that promote planning and Experimentation and build upon previous Exploration
- **Challenge addressed:** Most early high school students have a shallow understanding of how school relates to post-secondary and career goals and limited awareness of the requisite knowledge and skills
- **Outcome:** Students should “know their options”

**Execute**
- **Description:** Activities designed to help students create or execute a long-term plan and build upon previous Exploration and Experimentation
- **Challenge addressed:** 70% of students of high school graduation age drop out or are not expected to complete a post-secondary degree
- **Outcome:** Students should “make informed choices” regarding their future

### Key strategic plan elements
The following are key elements of our strategic plan:

| 1 | Firmly establish ourselves as owners of the space |
| 2 | Establish appropriate staffing levels across the organization to support our new mission |
| 3 | Add to our Analytics unit to drive investment decisions |
| 4 | Achieve the optimal balance of Explore, Experiment, and Execute initiatives for our portfolio |
| 5 | Determine the optimal balance of direct to kid, partner, and influencer channels for our portfolio |
| 6 | Maintain cutting edge direct to kid delivery through continued innovation |
| 7 | Build effective partnerships to generate thought leadership |
| 8 | Maintain a sustainable budget |
02
Go to market
**Go-to-market**

We are employing a variety of criteria to identify initiatives that deliver impact across our demographic segments, with Explore as the first priority.

Delivering impact across all three of our demographic segments:

1. **Know yourself** (Middle school - Explore)
2. **Know your options** (High school - Experiment)
3. **Make informed choices** (High school - Execute)

**Assessment Criteria**

- Student lifecycle (where kids are in education process)
- Market potential
- Societal impact
- Time to market
- Thought leadership/intellectual property potential
- Brand equity/affiliation
- Emerging/exceptional technology

**Direct to kid**

**Partnerships**

**Influencers**

Go-to-market approach driven by category of outcome being pursued – local service delivery, regional service delivery, national service delivery, longitudinal study, or some combination of the four.

Assessment criteria is the filter applied to opportunities to inform initiative go/no-go and prioritization decisions.
# Educational Outcomes

## Industry Standard Measurement Model

We use student impact metrics for direct to kid, thought leadership metrics for partnerships, and advocacy metrics for influencers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Direct to Kid</th>
<th>Partnerships</th>
<th>Influencers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Societal Impact</td>
<td>• Research &amp; data</td>
<td>• Strengthening of alliances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Verified Behavior Change</td>
<td>• PR &amp; media</td>
<td>• Shifts in social norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Intent to Change Behavior</td>
<td>• Digital &amp; marketing</td>
<td>• Policy change</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Knowledge/Confidence Gain</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Change in impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Participation</td>
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ASA Educational Outcomes Measurement is based on established research:
ASA measures impact against the following educational outcomes framework to determine the effectiveness of its programs whether they are direct to student through digital channels, through community partnerships, or ASA directly operated programs.

Examples of how each level is measured

- **Societal Impact**: Proven positive changes in a defined cohort. This can be at the school level, community level, or nationally based on a segment or demographic.

- **Verified Behavior Change**: There is a verified behavior change for an individual outside of the ASA intervention. Often involves a longitudinal measurement and a combination of data sources. These will vary based on the intervention. Some examples: Student enrolls in a high school class in computer science after being exposed in a middle school program on STEM. Student chooses a C&T training course after high school. Student applies to college.

- **Intent to Change Behavior**: Student expresses an intent to change their behavior based on an ASA intervention. Usually done with a post survey, i.e. “how likely are you to…?” Or online through a click-thru to a next step in the planning process.

- **Knowledge & Confidence Gain**: ASA can measure that the student gained knowledge as part of the intervention. Typically measured with a pre/post activity test. Answers are intended to be “right or wrong” and not opinion surveys, e.g. a grade on a test (knowledge). Also measured if observed speaking on a topic (confidence) within social media or in a classroom setting.

- **Satisfaction**: Students demonstrably express satisfaction with the intervention. Can be measured through surveys, classroom observation, or shares within social media. Willing to recommend to a friend or would re-engage with another ASA intervention.

- **Participation**: # of students exposed to ASA interventions. Duration of “time on task” within an intervention. Frequency of participation in an intervention.

ASA Educational Outcomes Measurement is based on established research:

Direct to kid educational outcomes measurement

ASA measures impact against the following framework to determine the effectiveness of its Digital Programs:

Examples of how each level is measured in the digital space:

Proven positive changes in a defined cohort. This can be at the school level, community level, national level or nationally. Digitally we can compare the longitudinal outcomes of active digital product users vs. industry averages (i.e. higher ed access/completion rates, career happiness measure, etc.).

There is a verified behavior change for an individual outside of the ASA intervention. Can be captured through digital product activity partnership reporting (i.e. # of successful mentor connections through our platform).

Student expresses an intent to change their behavior based upon an ASA intervention. Can be captured through discreet click activity within the digital product (i.e. request a mentor or search for scholarships).

ASA can measure that student gained knowledge as part of the intervention. Can be captured via digital product gateway questions producing a personalized RIASEC readout for students.

Students demonstrably express satisfaction with the intervention. Can be captured through repeat/serial viewing and 50%+ video viewing.

# of students exposed to ASA interventions. Can be captured in # of unique viewers/views and total social engagements (likes, follows, shares comments).

# of unique students viewing greater than 10 seconds and less than 50% of ASA’s proprietary video content.
Advocacy metrics
We will use the following metrics to measure advocacy outcomes in the short, intermediate, and long-term:

**Desired outcomes**:
- Increase coalition of support
- Changes in awareness of ASA as a trusted agent
- Increased issue awareness
- Changes in attitudes/beliefs/values
- Introduction, passage, and implementation of legislation
- Funding
- Every student is successful because they had the opportunity to plan their career & post-secondary path
- Students impacted
- Graduation rates
- Test scores
- Higher education attainment
- Skills gap decrease

**Output metrics**:
- Number & type of meetings and events held/attended
- Number & types of organizations reached
- Diversity of partnerships
- Number of partnerships
- Number & type of awareness generating activities and audiences reached
- Changes in political will
- Number & types of legislation related activities
- Level of legislator influence
- Progress in the legislative process
- Students impacted
- Graduation rates
- Test scores
- Higher education attainment
- Skills gap decrease

**Strengthening of alliances**
- Desired outcome: Increase coalition of support
- Output metrics: Number & type of meetings and events held/attended
- Number & types of organizations reached
- Diversity of partnerships
- Number of partnerships

**Shifts in social norms**
- Desired outcomes: Changes in awareness of ASA as a trusted agent
- Increased issue awareness
- Changes in attitudes/beliefs/values
- Output metrics: Number & type of awareness generating activities and audiences reached
- Changes in political will

**Policy change**
- Desired outcomes: Introduction, passage, and implementation of legislation
- Funding
- Output metrics: Number & types of legislation related activities
- Level of legislator influence
- Progress in the legislative process

**Change in impact**
- Desired outcome: Every student is successful because they had the opportunity to plan their career & post-secondary path
- Output metrics: Students impacted
- Graduation rates
- Test scores
- Higher education attainment
- Skills gap decrease
Thought leadership metrics
Thought leadership metrics will include advocacy metrics as well as research, PR and media, and digital and marketing indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research &amp; data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Number of research reports released</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Scope of research distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Impact of research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Third-party use of research</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Unique data produced</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Requests to participate in research</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PR &amp; media</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Speaking engagements and relevant conferences and events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Earned media</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Social media metrics – targeted followers and engagements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Content – self-published or placed in media outlets including bylined articles, blogs, whitepapers, eBooks, etc.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Digital &amp; marketing indicators</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Website traffic</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Brand awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inbound links to ASA content</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
We're already off to a good start
Current & planned portfolio
Our approach
We are currently focused on discovering which approaches work and who are the best partners

Phase:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research/Discovery</th>
<th>Scaling</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STEP 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Source initiatives through partners or internal R&amp;D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STEP 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot initiatives that best align with strategic framework</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>STEP 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Measure performance relative to impact metrics and select a subset to scale</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>STEP 4</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Drive systemic change by scaling selected initiatives via direct investment, thought leadership, and advocacy</td>
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## Approaches to scale
ASA’s approach to scale differs depending on the initiative’s delivery channel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delivery channel</th>
<th>Step 1: Sourcing</th>
<th>Step 2: Pilot</th>
<th>Step 3: Performance evaluation</th>
<th>Step 4: Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct to kid</td>
<td>Internal R&amp;D efforts</td>
<td>• Higher up-front investment • Fewer pilot initiatives</td>
<td>Scale/impact metrics prioritized with broader reach anticipated</td>
<td>Direct funding: Scale via financial infusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Primary: scouting and relationship-building • Secondary: internal R&amp;D efforts</td>
<td>• Lower up-front investment • More pilot initiatives</td>
<td>Impact metrics prioritized with deeper, more localized impact anticipated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships</td>
<td>• Primary: scouting and relationship-building • Secondary: internal R&amp;D efforts</td>
<td>• Lower up-front investment • More pilot initiatives</td>
<td>• Impact metrics prioritized with deeper impact anticipated • Potential for broader impact than community-based option</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influencers</td>
<td>• Primary: scouting and relationship-building • Secondary: internal R&amp;D efforts</td>
<td>• Lower up-front investment • More pilot initiatives</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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Continue to investigate, evaluate and modify. We want to do the right thing for the right opportunity.

In addition, we will explore potential investment opportunities as a means of accelerating scale across channels.
2019 direct to kid awareness and educational outcomes

Impact in 2019 will be driven by a modest scaling of our Explore video programming initiative generating increased **Awareness** and producing **Participation** level educational outcomes.

2019 impact by awareness and educational outcome level

m students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awareness</th>
<th>10.5m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>4.7m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To diversify its impact, drive awareness, and produce deeper educational outcomes, ASA will continue to invest in digital and partnership-based Experiment and Execute initiatives.

Note: Where students achieve multiple levels of impact within a single initiative, the highest level of impact achieved is the one that is counted.
Why digital direct to kid?
Because we want to meet kids where they are to drive deep educational outcomes at scale

**Near-term value**

- **Impact goal**: To drive awareness and level 1 participation educational outcomes efficiently and at scale
- **Description**:
  - Digital video programming designed to help kids explore their interests, passions, hobbies, and themselves
  - Distributed originally through asa.org and social platforms including Facebook and YouTube
  - Helps kids understand their higher education and career options

**Long-term value**

- **Impact goal**: Help young people navigate post-secondary and career options/paths via resources designed specifically for Gen Z digital natives
- **Description**:
  - A digital product designed to help kids experiment with career and post-secondary options and ultimately execute on a plan
  - Action-based outcome generation, this is not self-reported “intent to take a future step”, the digital product will offer concrete steps/actions toward tens of thousands of career/higher ed paths. The platform will capture and report on all actions/activities at the unique user level.
  - Should prototype research support moving forward, the next step will be a Beta buildout
Thought leadership through partners

Each year, we will assess the implementation and best practices of the new curriculum and outcomes for current students and alumni.
Beyond 2019
We will continue to build our capacity past 2019 through continued and interconnected development of our value chain

1. **Back the winners**
   Fund and scale the approaches and partners that work based on pilot-phase outcomes

2. **Produce thought leadership to scale impact**
   Establish ASA as a thought leader in career and post-secondary pathways

3. **Build business development capabilities to support increased activity**
   Develop scouting and research capability to identify new partners and opportunities

4. **Forge partnerships**
   Forge strategic partnerships to support innovation and pilot new initiatives
Strategic plan
The following are key takeaways from our strategic plan:

1. Firmly establish ourselves as owners of the space
2. Establish appropriate staffing levels across the organization to support our new mission
3. Add to our Analytics unit to drive investment decisions
4. Achieve the optimal balance of Explore, Experiment, and Execute initiatives for our portfolio
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