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# Current Conditions

## Your Aspiration Communication

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“You must have control of the authorship of your own destiny.  
The pen that writes your life story must be held in your own hand.”  
~ Irene C. Kassorla

Many of us can get caught up in the day-to-day details of school life. At its worst, our efforts decay into drudgery. Even at its best, such an approach can lead to the drama of putting out one fire after another with one new program after another. This month, step back and look at the big picture. What are you trying to accomplish for your students? What is the main goal? We believe everything a school does should encourage students to recognize the truth – that they are the authors of their own lives. With their aspirations as the primary plot line, students need us to nurture the self-worth, active engagement, and sense of purpose necessary to keep the ink flowing freely.



### ASPIRATIONS

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

~ Dr. Russell J. Quaglia

#### 5 Strategies for Promoting Aspirations

- ✓ Encourage students to develop plans for the future based on setbacks they have faced.
- ✓ Celebrate short and long-term accomplishments with students.
- ✓ Discuss with students how their current learning relates to their future hopes and dreams.
- ✓ Help students articulate what makes them proud.
- ✓ Challenge all students to learn more, do more, and achieve at higher levels.

#### 2008 My Voice™ Surveys

##### **For Consideration and Conversation**

The My Voice Student National Report shows that 91% of students agreed with the statement "I believe I can be successful." Three out of four students (77%) agreed with the statement "I am excited about my future."

- ◆ How do you foster students' excitement for their futures?
- ◆ What do you do to help students move closer to achieving their hopes and dreams?

To view the full My Voice Student National Report, go to [www.qisa.org/reports.php](http://www.qisa.org/reports.php).  
To order My Voice Surveys, go to [www.myvoicesurveys.com](http://www.myvoicesurveys.com).

# Aspirations in Action

## President Obama's Five Point Plan

President Barack Obama has laid out a bold plan to “restore the promise of America’s public education.” His administration has issued an unprecedented challenge to educators to “ensure that American children again lead the world in achievement, creativity and success.” Their plan includes five specific goals for improving the current system:

1. Improving early childhood education
2. Increasing emphasis on standards and assessment
3. Recruiting, educating and rewarding teachers
4. Increasing the number of the country’s charter schools
5. Expanding lifelong learning opportunities

As we know, there is an overabundance of programs already in place that address these issues, and many more are available than could ever be adopted. The difficulty school systems at all levels face is not a lack of effective programming, but a lack of a single, coherent, unifying vision.

Focusing on students’ aspirations provides a powerful organizing framework for all the efforts schools make to help students achieve academically and reach their fullest potential. The 8 Conditions provide schools with the structure needed so that the many oars our schools have in the water can pull in the same direction – toward the aspirations of each and every student. Schools that adopt the 8 Conditions provide staff, students, parents, and community members with a common language. Becoming fluent in Aspirations, from birth to graduation and beyond, can help all those invested in our nation’s educational system have a voice in its successful transformation. The 8 Conditions framework can:

1. Improve early childhood education by developing young students’ self-worth and active engagement in school from an early age.
2. Increase emphasis on standards and assessment by measuring the implicit curriculum and the affects of a school’s climate and culture on learning.
3. Provide new and veteran teachers with a “whole child” approach that articulates their own core beliefs about education.
4. Provide charter schools with a structure to pursue and share best practices in education.
5. Expand lifelong learning opportunities by focusing on and promoting students’ aspirations as a primary goal.

In response to the president’s challenge, the Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations can provide school systems with the resources they need to meet the expectations laid out by President Obama’s administration. Contact QISA for a more detailed prospectus of how we can help your district respond to the president’s call, not with more programs, but with a proven resource for aligning what you are already doing.

*E-mail your Aspirations stories, thoughts, or ideas to [info@qisa.org](mailto:info@qisa.org).*