

Asset Mapping Protocol

Asset mapping is a strength-based, systematic process used to identify, catalog, and visualize a community's valuable resources including people, skills, places and institutions to unite them for positive change. The protocol for asset mapping these [wellness variables](#)¹ involves a multi-step framework designed to holistically support student and family well-being. The steps should happen over the course of two or three months, with ample time for the team to collect and review the data, reflect and build an asset map and then determine next steps for maximizing resource utilization.

The process for mapping the eight wellness variables follows a structured protocol to ensure the resulting data is actionable and equitable.

Step 1. Begin by designating a team. The process begins by determining the specific goals, such as reducing chronic absence or increasing student engagement and family involvement. District leaders and administrators should establish a cross-departmental team including community school coordinators, school health, family engagement, student leaders, student support, special education and academic engagement and partners to lead the inventory. The designated team should review the protocol and make a plan for action, including determining which methods for data gathering will be utilized and who will be responsible along with creating a timeline for data and evidence collection. These steps should be completed prior to meeting to categorize and document resources by wellness dimension.

Step 2. Gather data. Information on assets should be collected through several qualitative and quantitative methods. Utilize this list to choose how the team will gather evidence about assets in the district:

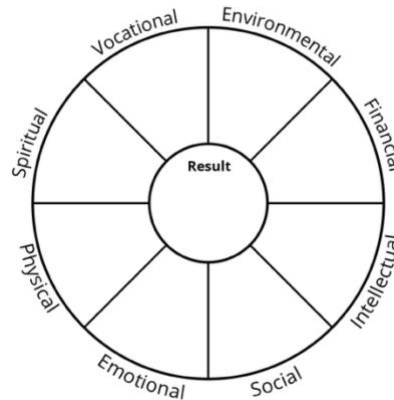
- Community walks: Physically scanning the environment to identify physical assets like parks or clinics.
- School walks: [The Scan of Environment and Attendance Tool](#) (SEAT): This tool should be used to map observable internal assets, such as whether staff greet students warmly, the visibility of diverse cultural displays and the presence of clean, social common areas.
- Empathy interviews: Qualitative data should be gathered to map “relational assets” to learn about cultural strengths and map how assets are experienced.

¹ “8 Dimensions of Wellness.” *Health Promotion & Wellness Services*, University of Maryland Health Center, <https://health.umd.edu/wellness-advocacy/health-promotion-wellness-services/8-dimensions-wellness>. Accessed 22 Dec. 2025.

- Facilitated dialogue: Inviting a cross-section of the community to participate in charette to surface cultural assets, neighborhood identity, informal networks and other community knowledge.
- Positive outcomes mapping: Identify bright spots, classrooms or groups where students are thriving despite high-pressure environments to map their specific practices as scalable assets.
- Surveys and interviews: Engaging students, families, school staff, residents and partners to identify “human assets” (talents, skills, trusted messengers, family knowledge).
- Internet research: Documenting formal institutions and nonprofit organizations. Access <https://findhelp.org/> to find resources for housing, financial assistance, health care and more.

Step 3. Categorize resources by wellness dimensions. As wellness assets are identified, they are documented and tagged in an Asset Mapping Template. (More information about the wellness variables can be found [here](#).) Each resource must be categorized under one or more of the following variables to ensure a holistic view of support:

- **Intellectual wellness:** Identifying supports for academics, such as tutoring programs or libraries, a collaborative learning environment and high-quality instruction.
- **Physical wellness:** Inventorying supports for the body, including health clinics, dental services and parks.
- **Emotional wellness:** Documenting support for the mind, such as counseling or mental health practitioners.
- **Social wellness:** Mapping supports for belonging and engagement, such as youth clubs, enrichment programming or mentorship programs.
- **Vocational wellness:** Identifying supports for careers, including job training or community colleges.
- **Financial wellness:** Cataloging supports with money, such as financial literacy programs or emergency assistance.
- **Spiritual wellness:** Documenting supports for social, civic and community building, such as faith-based organizations.
- **Environmental wellness:** Identifying supports for daily living, including food banks, housing assistance and transportation.



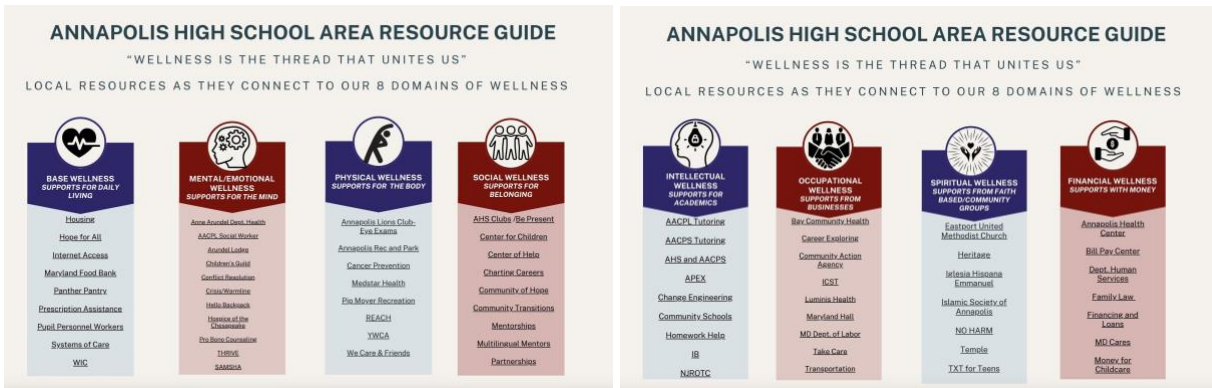
Adapted from Theory of Aligned Contributions, developed by Jolie Bain Pillsbury; and the University of Maryland.

Utilize this mapping image to help people visualize the resources by wellness dimension. The visual can be enlarged to create an in-person activity around the wellness dimensions or used as a smaller handout as part of gathering information. [Download both images for printing.](#)

Step 4. Document asset details. For each partner or organization identified, specific operational details should be captured to make a map of resources and to assess who has access to them and where the programs are available. Document the following details:

- **Type of organization:** (e.g., community-based organization, faith-based, business or government agency).
- **Type of program:** What specific service, programming, or services are being provided.
- **Wellness dimension addressed:** Intellectual wellness; physical wellness; emotional wellness; social wellness; vocational wellness; financial wellness; spiritual wellness; and environmental wellness.
- **Groups served:** Identify which specific student groups, schools or neighborhoods have access.
- **Frequency of engagement:** How often the service is available.
- **Primary program contact:** This ensures connections can be made quickly for families.
- **Youth voice continuum:** Analyze whether the identified assets promote true youth agency. Assess if the relationship with youth is transactional or if it fosters collaboration and leadership.
- **Racial and cultural literacy audit:** Examine whether the staff and partners possess the cultural and linguistic competence to value diversity and adapt their support to the community's context.

Example Asset Map for Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Annapolis Cluster



Step 5. Analysis and strategic application. Once the map is created, it can inform strategic planning and continuous improvement. Use the following steps to develop strategic plans as well as monitor progress:

1. **Asset expansion:** Strengthening and scaling by replicating effective practices to underserved schools or communities, building on what is already working within the community.
2. **Accessibility audit:** Analyzing whether resources are accessible to underserved groups of students, families and communities.
3. **Usage audit:** Assessing the extent to which a community utilizes the resource once it is made available or is accessible.
4. **Curriculum enhancement:** Incorporating local physical or health resources into place-based learning or STEM lessons.
5. **Partnership expansion:** Using the data to co-create solutions with community partners to address specific barriers like transportation or chronic illness.
6. **Gap analysis:** Identifying which wellness dimensions lack sufficient support or which schools or communities are underserved.

Action step: _____

Lead person/team: _____

Timeline (start-end): _____

Schools/student groups targeted: _____

Success indicators: _____

Overview of steps for each analysis

Asset expansion: Strengthening and scaling by replicating effective practices to underserved schools or communities, building on what is already working within the community.

1. Identify strong assets based on engagement, trust or positive outcomes.
2. Analyze success factors such as location, staffing, cultural alignment or operating hours.
3. Assess opportunities to scale or replicate in other schools or communities.
4. Connect strong assets to underserved areas through partnerships or outreach strategies.
5. Monitor impact on attendance, engagement and wellness outcomes to guide continuous improvement.

Accessibility audit: Analyzing whether resources are accessible to underserved populations.

1. Identify underserved groups using attendance data, demographics or health indicators.
2. Assess resource accessibility such as eligibility, language, cost, transportation, hours and cultural relevance.
3. Compare access levels across student groups or ZIP codes.
4. Document gaps in opportunities or disproportional patterns.
5. Recommend targeted strategies to improve access for all students and families.

Usage audit: Assessing the extent to which a community utilizes the resource once it is available or accessible.

1. Select a resource or service to review.
2. Collect usage data (e.g., participation rates, sign-ins, referral counts, attendance, repeat use).
3. Analyze barriers to utilization such as awareness, transportation, stigma, scheduling or trust.
4. Compare usage across groups to identify participation gaps.
5. Recommend communication, outreach, or design changes to increase utilization.

Curriculum enhancement: Incorporating local physical or health resources into place-based learning or STEM lessons.

1. Identify relevant local health, wellness or environmental resources.
2. Align resource themes to grade-level standards or learning goals.
3. Co-design activities with educators (e.g., field lessons, data inquiry, project-based learning).
4. Pilot curricular activities and gather teacher/student feedback.
5. Document exemplars and expand integration districtwide.

Partnership expansion: Using data to co-create solutions with community partners to address barriers like transportation or chronic illness.

1. Identify community partners aligned to target needs or barriers.
2. Share asset mapping findings to establish a common purpose.
3. Co-design strategies and roles (e.g., service delivery, outreach, funding, alignment).
4. Pilot joint solutions and monitor outcomes.
5. Formalize and scale partnerships using memorandum of understanding (MOUs), shared goals and evaluation metrics.

Gap analysis: Identifying which wellness dimensions lack sufficient support or which schools or communities are underserved.

1. Define the focus area (e.g., wellness dimensions, neighborhoods or groups).
2. Map existing resources to each dimension or location.
3. Compare resources to needs and population data to identify imbalances.
4. Highlight missing supports or underserved areas based on evidence.
5. Recommend resource development or strategic investment to address gaps.

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Protocol adapted from Theory of Aligned Contributions, developed by Jolie Bain Pillsbury; and the University of Maryland.

As a nonprofit initiative, Attendance Works partners with schools, districts, states, communities and organizations to ensure that chronic absence is recognized as a serious issue that can be addressed through proactive, supportive strategies. Visit www.attendanceworks.org for free downloadable resources and tools!