



The following is a preview of the 1-day Toward Higher Ground academic achievement and character-development workshop, including notes on content, materials, and arrangements that come together to provide educators with the best possible experience.

### Workshop Content

The Toward Higher Ground workshop helps teachers achieve three important goals:

- Increase academic achievement
- Improve student character
- Increase student confidence and motivation

### Workshop Agenda

(includes typical schedule, though specific times may be adjusted if needed)

*8:00 – 8:30 a.m. Registration (30 minutes)*

Participants check in and receive name badges and workshop packets. Provide coffee, juice, fruit, and donuts.

*8:30 a.m. Introduction (15 minutes)*

Introduce Jim Kestner (see brief bio at the end of this document, which may be used for the introduction), who will then introduce the workshop.

*8:45 – 9:45 a.m. Session 1 – Standing Out from the Crowd (60 minutes)*

Jim sets the stage by motivating participants and introducing them to a powerful tool for helping students understand both the importance of making good choices and perspective that will empower them to overcome roadblocks that stand in their way of success.

*9:45 – 10:00 a.m. Break (15 minutes)*

*10:00 – 10:30 a.m. Session 2 – Research (30 minutes)*

What do we know and how can we actually put it to use? Examines research in academic achievement, student diversity, and character development, drawing together the threads that teachers may weave into a climbing rope to prepare students to scale the mountain of character and achievement.

## Workshop Agenda (continued)

### *10:30 – 11:30 a.m. Session 2 – Assessment (60 minutes)*

Where are we now and how do we find out? Introduces the concept of assessing the school, home, and community environment, along with a set of instruments for gathering that information in print, electronically, or both. Demonstrates the power of this assessment for selecting the path best suited to making a difference in each teacher's environment. Compares the steps taken through a typical prepackaged program and those revealed through the assessment process. Participants receive a set of customizable assessment tools to take back to their schools.

### *11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Lunch (45 minutes)*

Either provide lunch or break to allow participants to get lunch on their own.

### *12:15 – 1:45 p.m. Session 3 – Planning (90 minutes)*

What do we need to do and what are the steps for getting it done? Introduces the planning process and provides a planning template for success, then breaks participants into groups to translate general plans into action plans to put into use in their own settings. Introduces electronic, print, and other resources that are provided in participant packets, as well as those available from other sources (includes a look at strengths and weaknesses of some of the most popular resources and tools from government and major character-development entities, as well as over the web from individual schools, nonprofit organizations, etc.).

### *1:45 – 2:00 p.m. Break*

### *2:00 – 3:00 p.m. Session 4 – Implementation (60 minutes)*

Who should be involved and how do we get them on board? Expands upon individuals' plans by leading them through the process of identifying opportunities and challenges they might encounter in implementing the plans they have made, along with strategies for minimizing challenges and maximizing opportunities systematically. Includes strategies for securing financial and human resources (volunteers and otherwise) to implement their plans successfully. Walks participants through the process of following up with Jim to have assessments analyzed and consult with him throughout the implementation process.

### *3:00 – 3:30 p.m. Session 5 – Sustainability (30 minutes)*

How do we track our progress and how do we continue improving for the long term? Overviews follow-up services in place, as well as strategies for reviewing progress throughout the current year and in the future, revising goals and making adjustments needed to remain responsive to the needs of students, teachers, parents, administrators, and the community.

### *3:30 p.m. Dismiss*

Jim will remain available for individual consultation after the formal session ends.

### Workshop Costs

Cost for a host who will invite others to register for the event is free, though the hosting organization is responsible for providing a facility and any refreshments at its own expense. The hosting organization is also responsible for promoting the workshop to educators. The minimum cost for registration is \$150 per person with a minimum of 10 individuals registered by no later than two weeks prior to the workshop date (if a single school sends more than one person, a \$50 discount applies to all registrants after the first from that school). A host may charge more than \$150 per person for registration if it would like to use such costs to offset its own operating expenses and/or use the workshop to raise funds for its own programming. For this type of event, participants receive the workshop and survey tools, as well as the Standing Out from the Crowd DVD (\$75.00 value) and a \$50.00 voucher to purchase resources from Jim's resource catalog. Each participant's school also receives follow-up consultation to assist in implementation and assessment of the program's success (Jim will analyze and report results of the self-assessments conducted by the school as part of this consultation).

Cost for an individual school to host a workshop for its faculty is \$2,500, which includes the workshop, survey tools, and consultation before and after the workshop, as well as a complimentary copy of the Toward Higher Ground DVD (\$250.00 value), license to print Toward Higher Ground parenting booklet (\$500.00 value), Standing Out from the Crowd DVD (\$75.00 value), and a \$500.00 voucher to purchase resources from Jim's resource catalog. The school also receives follow-up consultation to assist in implementation and assessment of the program's success (Jim will analyze and report results of the self-assessments conducted by the school as part of this consultation). The school is responsible for providing a facility and providing any refreshments at its own expense.

### Jim's Abbreviated Bio

Jim Kestner is a nationally recognized character-development specialist, currently teaching a web-based graduate course on youth character development and coordinating web-based and alternative teacher certification programs at Eastern Illinois University (EIU) in Charleston, Illinois. He has spent the past 22 years conducting research and working with teachers, parents and students to develop student character and increase academic achievement. Jim's clients have included Oprah Winfrey, the National Education Association, Horace Mann Educators Corporation, the Abraham Lincoln Institute for Literacy in America, NASA, and several Olympic National Governing Bodies. He has taught at Northwestern University and University of Illinois campuses at Chicago and Urbana and have consulted with P-12 schools, colleges, and universities institutions across the nation.

### Contact Information

Jim Kestner, Ph.D.  
Voice: 217/778-3512  
Email: jimk@kesweb.com  
Web: kesweb.com