

# Arkansas State SEL Guidance and DESSA Crosswalk

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Arkansas' Division of Elementary and Secondary Education created an Academic Playbook, G. U. I. D. E. for Life, that outlines social and emotional learning benchmarks for Growth, Understanding, Interactions, Decisions, and Empathy. The DESSA is a standardized, norm-referenced behavior rating scale that assesses the social and emotional competencies of students in kindergarten to grade 12. It can be completed by teachers, guardians, and out of school time staff in about 5-8 minutes. The DESSA is strength-based; the items focus on positive social and emotional skills. The DESSA can be used to inform how a student is progressing with their social and emotional development. This crosswalk outlines the overlap between Aperture's competencies measured by the DESSA and Arkansas' Division of Elementary and Secondary Education's, Academic Playbook, G. U. I. D. E. for Life.

## **The DESSA is organized into subscales that provide information about eight social and emotional competencies. These competencies include:**

1. **Self-awareness:** a child's realistic understanding of their strengths and limitations and consistent desire for self-improvement;
2. **Social-awareness:** a child's capacity to interact with others in a way that shows respect for their ideas and behaviors, recognizes their impact on them, and uses cooperation and tolerance in social situations;
3. **Self-management:** a child's success in controlling their emotions and behaviors, to complete a task or succeed in a new or challenging situation;
4. **Goal-directed behavior:** a child's initiation of and persistence in completing tasks of varying difficulty;
5. **Relationship skills:** a child's consistent performance of socially acceptable actions that promote and maintain positive connections with others;
6. **Personal responsibility:** a child's tendency to be careful and reliable in their actions and in contributing to group efforts;
7. **Decision making:** an approach to problem solving that involves learning from others and from their previous experiences, using values to guide action, and accepting responsibility for decisions;
8. **Optimistic thinking:** an attitude of confidence, hopefulness, and positive thinking regarding themselves and their life situations in the past, present, and future.

**Table 1. Overview of Alignment of Aperture’s Competencies to Arkansas’ Division of Elementary and Secondary Education’s Academic Playbook, G. U. I. D. E. for Life.**

*Note. SA = Self-Awareness, SM = Self-Management, SO = Social Awareness, RS = Relationship Skills, DM = Decision-Making, GB = Goal-Directed Behavior, PR = Personal Responsibility, OT = Optimistic Thinking. These tables use the G. U. I. D. E. benchmarks outlined for students in middle and junior high school as an example, however, they apply to all grade bands.*

Student-Friendly Learning Targets	SA	SM	SO	RS	DM	GB	PR	OT
I can analyze how thoughts and emotions affect decision making and responsible behavior. (Growth)	X				X		X	X
I can identify my own personal characteristics and values. (Growth)	X							X
I can recognize how my behavioral choices can impact my school and life success. (Understanding)		X	X			X		
I can analyze emotions that contribute to or detract from my ability to effectively problem solve. (Understanding)	X	X			X	X		
I can understand group dynamics and respond appropriately in the group. (Interaction)		X	X	X				
Evaluate strategies for preventing and resolving interpersonal conflicts. (Interaction)				X	X			
I can collaboratively develop and model classroom rules, routines, and norms. (Decisions)		X	X					
I can identify a problem, state what the problem is, and identify the perspectives of those involved. (Decisions)		X			X		X	
I can demonstrate ways to express empathy for others. (Empathy)		X	X	X				
I can show respect and sensitivity for other people’s perspectives and cultures. (Empathy)		X	X	X				



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Aperture Education empowers over 3,000 schools and out-of-school-time programs across North America to measure, strengthen, and support social and emotional competence in K-12 youth and educators. This system enables education leaders to make strategic, data-based decisions about SEL within their organizations. The Aperture system includes the DESSA suite of strength-based assessments, CASEL-aligned intervention strategies, and robust reporting, all in one easy-to-use digital platform. Aperture has supported over one million students in their social and emotional growth and continues to develop innovative solutions to bring the whole child into focus. To learn more, visit [www.ApertureEd.com](http://www.ApertureEd.com).