

Colorado State Social Emotional Wellness Standards and DESSA Crosswalk

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Colorado's State Department of Education outlines student wellness standards as a part of their comprehensive health standards for students in kindergarten to grade 12. Schools and districts in Colorado might consider using the DESSA to measure student growth across these standards. The DESSA is a standardized, norm-referenced behavior rating scale that assesses student growth across these competencies for 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 development. This crosswalk outlines the overlap between Aperture's competencies measured by the DESSA and Colorado's Social and Emotional Wellness and Prevention and Risk Management Standards.

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 Colorado’s Comprehensive Health Standards

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. This table uses the indicators outlined for students in 6th grade. Indicators are available for each grade band on Colorado’s Department of Education’s website.

Standard	Competencies	SA	SM	SO	RS	DM	GB	PR	OT
Social and Emotional Wellness	1A - Explain the interrelationship of mental, emotional, and social health.	X				X			
	1B - Analyze the relationship between thoughts, emotions, feelings and behavior.	X				X			
	1C - Identify healthy ways to express needs, wants, and feelings.	X	X						
	1D - Explain the causes, symptoms, and effects of stress, anxiety, sadness, and depression.	X	X						
	1E - Identify when someone should seek help for sadness, hopelessness, and depression.	X							
	1F - Identify emotions and feelings associated with loss and grief.	X							
	1G - Explain how modern technology can have a positive and negative impact on mental and emotional health.	X		X					
	2A - Demonstrate refusal and negotiation skills that avoid or reduce health risks.	X	X				X		
	2B - Demonstrate effective conflict management or resolution strategies.		X	X	X				
	2C - Demonstrate how to ask for assistance to enhance the health of self and others.		X				X		X
	2D - Identify ways to advocate for self and others to enhance health and safety.		X			X			

Standard	Competencies	SA	SM	SO	RS	DM	GB	PR	OT	
Prevention and Risk Management	1A - Analyze internal influences such as genetics, personality, and risk-seeking behaviors on drug use (marijuana, illegal drugs, prescription drugs, alcohol, and tobacco).					X		X		
	1B - Analyze external influences on the use of marijuana, illegal drugs, prescription drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.				X	X		X		
	1C - Analyze various strategies the media use, including advertisements and movies, to encourage or discourage marijuana, illegal drugs, prescription drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.					X				
	1D - Identify common mixed messages about marijuana, illegal drugs, prescription drugs, alcohol, and tobacco use in the media.					X				
	1E - Analyze the perception versus the reality of drug use in adolescents (marijuana, illegal drugs, prescription drugs, alcohol, and tobacco).					X				
	2A - Demonstrate effective, assertive refusal skills in refusing marijuana, illegal drugs, abuse of prescription drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.		X				X			
	2B - Explain how decisions about drug and substance use affect relationships.		X		X	X				
	2C - Identify and summarize positive alternatives to drug and substance use.						X			
	2D - Demonstrate planning skills for avoiding marijuana, illegal drugs, abuse of prescription drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.						X	X		
	3A - Understand the definition of bullying, as well as the roles of a bystander, perpetrator/bully, and victim in bullying.			X			X			
	3B - Demonstrate how to prevent or stop bullying as a bystander, perpetrator, or victim.		X		X					
	3C - Understand the consequences of unaddressed bullying for the victim, perpetrator/bully, and bystanders.			X					X	
	3D - Advocate for a positive and respectful school environment that supports pro-social behavior.			X	X					X
	3E - Demonstrate the ability to identify a parent, trusted adult, or appropriate legal authorities to whom school or community violence should be reported.						X			
	3F - Describe the dangers of and actions to be taken if aware of threats to harm self or others.						X			
	3G - Describe the dangers of and actions to be taken if weapons are seen or suspected in schools.						X			
	3H - Demonstrate appropriate communication skills to solve conflicts nonviolently.			X			X			
	4A - Demonstrate the ability to identify and correct safety hazards at home, in school, and in the community.						X			
	4B - Develop a safety plan for self and/or others in home, school, and community.						X			



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.