

Minnesota SEL Learning Standards and DESSA Crosswalk

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Minnesota's State Department of Education outlines social and emotional learning standards for students in kindergarten to grade 12. Schools and districts in Minnesota might consider measuring student growth across these standards using the DESSA. The DESSA is a CASEL-aligned, 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. This crosswalk outlines the overlap between Aperture's competencies measured by the DESSA and Minnesota state SEL 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 Minnesota State 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 standards outlined for students in grades 4-5; however, the DESSA alignment is consistent for all grade bands.

Competency	Definition	SA	SM	SO	RS	DM	GB	PR	OT
Self-Awareness	Develop more complex vocabulary to communicate their emotions and feelings.	X							
	Distinguish degrees of their own emotional intensity.	X	X						
	Recognize the connection between their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors.	X	X						
	Describe how they physically respond to emotion.	X	X						
	Describe the personal strengths and assets they possess that make them successful members of their school and community.	X		X					X
	Identify and explore opportunities to develop skills and talents.	X							X
	Determine ways to use family, school and community resources to accomplish tasks.	X		X			X		
	Define their role in ensuring safety and respect for others.	X		X	X				
	Accepting positive or negative consequences of their own choices and actions.	X						X	
	Identify areas of personal responsibility.	X						X	
	Explain the benefits of being responsible to self and others.	X		X				X	

Competency	Definition	SA	SM	SO	RS	DM	GB	PR	OT
Self-Management	Use coping skills such as calming down, walking away, self-talk, seeking help or mediation to manage their emotions and behaviors.	X	X						
	Use constructive ways of expressing their emotions, thoughts, impulses and stress such as through using "I" statements.		X		X				
	Understand causes and effects of their emotions, thoughts, impulses, stress and distress.		X			X			
	Adapt for and overcome obstacles by demonstrating perseverance.		X				X	X	
	Analyze the relationship between your own ethical values - such as honesty, respect and integrity - and behavior.		X			X		X	
	Identify goals across multiple domains (e.g., academic, personal, and social).		X				X		X
	Monitor progress toward goals across multiple domains.		X				X		X
	Implement steps necessary to achieve their goals.		X				X		X
	Identify internal and external resources necessary to overcome obstacles in meeting goals.		X				X		X
	Demonstrate the ability to actively engage in a feedback loop.		X	X			X		

Competency	Definition	SA	SM	SO	RS	DM	GB	PR	OT
Social Awareness	Identify how their behavior affects the emotions of others.		X	X	X				
	Demonstrate respect for others' perspectives and point of views.		X	X	X				
	Identify verbal, physical or situational cues that indicate how others may feel.			X	X				
	Describe benefits of personal qualities of others and why everyone shouldn't be the same.			X	X				
	Offer alternative ways for addressing conflict or differences of opinions with peers.			X	X		X		
	Identify contributions of various social and cultural groups.			X	X				
	Define and recognize examples of stereotyping, discrimination and prejudice.			X	X			X	
	Work collaboratively with peers to identify, understand and respond to a social need. This work could be a community or school service project.			X	X			X	
	Describe what they learned about themselves in helping others.	X		X	X				
	Identify and perform tasks that contribute to their school and community.			X		X		X	
	Recognize qualities of positive peer and adult role models.			X	X				X
	Distinguish situations when students need support versus when they don't.	X		X		X			
Explain how family members, peers, school personnel, and community members can support school success and responsible behavior.			X	X			X		

Competency	Definition	SA	SM	SO	RS	DM	GB	PR	OT
Relationship Skills	Recognize how groups behave differently than individuals and affect an individual's emotions, attitudes and behaviors.	X		X	X				
	Recognize how facial expressions, body language and tone impact interactions.			X	X				
	Demonstrate different ways to provide feedback to peers.		X		X	X			
	Use attentive listening skills to foster better communication.		X		X	X			
	Recognize the difference between positive and negative relationships and identify behaviors that contribute to each.				X	X			X
	Recognize the value of friendships with a variety of individuals.				X				X
	Identify a problem in a relationship and know how to seek appropriate assistance such as asking for peer mediation or adult assistance, etc.).	X			X	X			
	Demonstrate capacity to engage in cooperative learning and working toward group learning goals with peers.		X		X		X		
	Distinguish between positive and negative peer pressure.			X	X	X			
	Identify conflicts as a natural part of life.		X	X	X				
	Demonstrate the ability to state the problem from multiple perspectives.	X			X	X			
	Identify solutions to interpersonal conflict that meet needs of self and others.				X		X	X	
	Demonstrate ability to state the problem using "I" statements.		X		X	X			
	Understand differences between our intent and the impact of our actions/words.	X		X	X				

Competency	Definition	SA	SM	SO	RS	DM	GB	PR	OT
Responsible Decision-Making	Contribute to school safety by supporting classroom, lunchroom, and playground shared norms and rules.		X			X		X	
	Identify ways certain decisions or choices effect short- and long-term goals.					X	X		
	Identify positive and negative consequences of decisions for oneself and others.		X	X		X			
	Identify a variety of decisions/problems that students have at school.			X		X			
	Generate alternative solutions to their identified problems.					X	X		
	Assess consequences of possible solutions for the identified problems and demonstrate methods for reaching consensus or a decision.					X	X		
	Evaluate the results of their actions after making a decision.					X	X	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.