

# Mississippi SEL Learning Standards and DESSA Crosswalk

*Prepared November 2022*

Mississippi's State Department of Education outlines social and emotional learning standards for students in kindergarten to grade 12. Schools and districts in Mississippi 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 Mississippi 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 Mississippi 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 3-5; however, the DESSA alignment is consistent for all grade bands.

Competency	Definition	SA	SM	SO	RS	DM	GB	PR	OT
Self-Awareness	Identify range of emotions experienced.	X							
	Describe situations that cause range of emotions.	X		X					
	Identify physical responses to intense emotions.	X	X						
	Communicate emotions through appropriate means (i.e. appropriate words, gestures, tone, facial expressions, etc.). Describe how emotions impact behavior.	X	X			X			
	Identify personal qualities and characteristics one possesses.	X	X						
	Describe benefits of personal qualities and characteristics.	X							X
	Describe how personal qualities and interests impact decision-making.	X	X			X			
	Compare and contrast qualities and interests of self.	X							
	Identify strengths and areas for growth.	X							X
	Describe personal skills in need of further development.	X					X		X
	Describe how personal strengths impact choices.	X					X		X
	Define personal responsibility and identify ways to exhibit it in daily life.	X					X	X	
	Identify how personal choices affect self and others.	X		X			X		
	Describe benefits of personal responsibility.	X					X	X	
	Demonstrate responsible behaviors.	X	X					X	

Competency	Definition	SA	SM	SO	RS	DM	GB	PR	OT
Self-Management	Identify the relationship between thoughts, stress, emotions (i.e. feelings) and behavior.	X	X						
	Identify situations that cause self to experience negative emotions (e.g., sadness, anger, anxiety, disappointment, etc.).	X	X	X					
	Demonstrate ability to appropriately express emotions.	X	X					X	
	Develop strategies to use when angry or stressed (e.g., walk away, counting to 10, seek help, etc.).	X	X			X			
	Identify strategies for controlling impulses and demonstrate the utilization of at least one (e.g., deep breathing, self-talk, seek help, etc.).	X	X			X			
	Demonstrate the ability to stay on task with limited distractions.	X	X			X			
	Develop willingness to attempt new tasks and share ideas with others.		X		X		X		
	Identify strategies for persevering through difficult situations or tasks		X				X		X
	Determine supports needed to organize aspects of home and school life.		X	X			X		
	Describe steps necessary for setting and achieving tasks and goals.		X					X	X
	Differentiate between short- and long-term goals.		X				X	X	
	Complete short- or long-term goal with minimal assistance.		X				X	X	
	Monitor progress toward achieving personal or academic goals.		X				X	X	
	Determine home and school supports or resources needed to complete tasks or goals.		X	X			X		

Competency	Definition	SA	SM	SO	RS	DM	GB	PR	OT
Social Awareness	Recognize the emotions of others using verbal and visual cues.			X	X				
	Recognize non-verbal social cues from others and their impact on emotions.			X	X				
	Identify how one's own behavior impacts others' emotions.			X	X	X			
	Identify multiple perspectives or viewpoints in different situations.			X	X	X			
	Recognize the existence of various groups based on social and cultural factors (e.g., race, gender, age, religion, disability, etc.).			X	X				
	Identify similarities between various social and cultural groups.	X		X	X				
	Develop strategies for building relationships with individuals who are different from self.		X	X	X				
	Explain the definition of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination.			X	X				
	Identify bullying behaviors and their impact on others.			X	X			X	
	Identify different social norms in the school and community.			X	X				
	Recognize ways to help peers complete tasks, goals, or address needs.			X	X		X		
	Identify how helping behaviors impact self and others.	X		X	X				

Competency	Definition	SA	SM	SO	RS	DM	GB	PR	OT
Relationship Skills	Utilize appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication with others (e.g. words, tone, facial expressions, gestures, etc.).		X		X				
	Determine cooperative group behaviors (e.g. listening, encouraging, acknowledging others' perspectives, compromising, and reaching agreement).			X	X	X			
	Identify ways to encourage and support others and their contributions.			X	X				X
	Demonstrate good sportsmanship by playing fairly and being gracious in winning and losing.		X	X	X				
	Demonstrate ability to give and receive compliments appropriately.		X		X				X
	Determine and demonstrate qualities of good friends.	X			X	X			
	Describe and utilize more than one strategy to build positive relationships with peers, family, and others.		X		X	X			
	Differentiate among safe and unsafe behaviors in relationships with others.		X		X			X	
	Identify the six types of peer pressure (e.g., spoken, unspoken, direct, indirect, negative and positive).		X	X	X				
	Develop strategies for resisting negative peer pressure.		X		X			X	
	Recognize that conflict occurs as a natural part of life.		X	X	X				
	Identify causes and effects of conflict and how one's response impacts self and others.	X	X		X				
	Utilize steps of a simple conflict resolution/problem solving process such as identifying problems, active listening, expressing emotions, brainstorming solutions, evaluating solutions, etc.		X		X		X		
	Describe proactive ways to prevent conflict.		X		X	X			
Recognizes the difference between constructive and destructive ways of handling conflict and peer pressure.				X	X	X			

Competency	Definition	SA	SM	SO	RS	DM	GB	PR	OT
Responsible Decision-Making	Describe steps of decision-making process and utilize more than one.		X			X	X	X	
	Identify choices or solutions to various situations at home, school, or in community and demonstrate ability to make appropriate selections.		X			X	X	X	
	Develop criteria for evaluating decisions and consequences for self and others.					X	X	X	
	Identify examples of ethical behaviors (e.g. fairness, honesty, respect, etc.) in decision making and demonstrate more than one.					X		X	
	Demonstrate knowledge of social norms and how they affect decision making.		X	X		X			
	Explain why safety and ethical considerations are important in making decisions.			X		X		X	
	Evaluate impact of past and present choices and decisions on self and others.			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).