

Virginia State SEL Standards and DESSA Crosswalk

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Virginia's State Department of Education outlines social and emotional learning standards for students in kindergarten to grade 12 that are aligned with CASEL's competencies. Schools and districts in Virginia might consider using the DESSA to measure student growth across their competencies. 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 Virginia's state Social Emotional Learning 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 Virginia’s State Competencies

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 grades 5 and 6. Indicators are available for each grade band on Virginia’s Department of Education’s website.

Standard	Indicator	SA	SM	SO	RS	DM	GB	PR	OT
Self-Awareness	SeA1: I can differentiate among a variety of complex emotions.	X							
	SeA1: I can identify examples of how my positive and negative self-talk can impact my emotions.	X							
	SeA1: I can anticipate my emotions based on my body signals, events, and situations.	X							
	SeA2: I can analyze how my personal strengths give me confidence in multiple settings.	X							X
	SeA2: I can identify actions I can take to overcome personal challenges.	X					X		
	SeA2: I can understand the relationship between my values and interests.	X							
	SeA2: I can develop an awareness of and comfort with my membership in multiple groups in society.	X		X					

Standard	Indicator	SA	SM	SO	RS	DM	GB	PR	OT
Self-Management	SeM1: I can identify the difference between healthy and unhealthy stress levels.	X	X						
	SeM1: I can proactively plan and apply a coping skill for handling a stressful situation that typically causes me to experience uncomfortable emotions.		X			X			
	SeM1: I can identify and utilize strategies for persevering through challenges and setbacks.		X			X			
	SeM2: I can identify the importance of setting academic goals for personal growth.		X				X		X
	SeM2: I can plan, implement, and monitor progress towards reaching my goals.		X				X		X
	SeM2: I can manage my time to help me achieve my goals.		X				X		X

Standard	Competencies	SA	SM	SO	RS	DM	GB	PR	OT
Social Awareness	SoA1: I can empathize with others' thoughts, perspectives, and emotions.			X	X				
	SoA1: I can gain a broader understanding by asking questions and listening to those with different perspectives, backgrounds, and cultures.	X		X	X				
	SoA1: I can express gratitude for others including those with different perspectives.			X	X				
	SoA2: I can identify when people are treated unfairly.			X	X				
	SoA2: I can explain how stereotypes can create bias.			X	X				

Standard	Competencies	SA	SM	SO	RS	DM	GB	PR	OT
Relationship Skills	ReS1: I can explain and demonstrate how positive communication skills help build and maintain healthy relationships. (Incorporate social media).			X	X	X			
	ReS1: I can use active listening to successfully understand multiple perspectives.		X	X	X				
	ReS1: I can outline and practice the use of conflict resolution skills with adult support.			X	X	X			
	ReS1: I can demonstrate how I will navigate situations when I might feel pressured to go along with injustice.			X	X			X	
	ReS2: I can independently perform different roles in a group setting.			X	X				
	ReS2: I can self-assess my relationship building skills.	X		X	X				
	ReS2: I can recognize how positive and negative peer pressure affect me.	X		X	X				
	ReS2: I can demonstrate how to give and receive feedback in a constructive way.	X		X	X				

Standard	Competencies	SA	SM	SO	RS	DM	GB	PR	OT
Responsible Decision Making	DeM1: I can determine what is within my control, what is outside of my control and what is within my influence when facing a problem.					X		X	
	DeM1: I can show curiosity about a social problem by asking questions and gathering evidence to identify potential solutions.	X				X			
	DeM1: I can identify the multiple outcomes that can result from my choices.					X			
	DeM2: I can describe my beliefs, values, and the multiple groups in society that help create my identity and inform my decision making process.			X		X			
	DeM2: I can explain how the perspectives of others should be considered when making decisions.			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.