

New York Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks and DESSA Crosswalk

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The [New York Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks](#), republished in 2022, articulate the social emotional learning goals for all NY students. These goals and their associated indicators provide guidance to adults on the skills and abilities to teach and foster throughout a young person's progression from kindergarten through graduation.

The DESSA suite of assessments measures key social and emotional competencies essential for student success now and into the future. The DESSA assessments span kindergarten through 12th grade and can be completed by educators, students, and parents or guardians. The assessments are nationally standardized, norm-referenced, strength-based behavior rating scales, measuring the positive skills, behaviors, and mindsets necessary for students to thrive. The six competencies measured by the DESSA, their abbreviations, and their definitions are listed here:

- *Self-Awareness (SA)*: The ability to understand emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence one's behavior; recognize strengths and limitations; and develop healthy identities and a sense of purpose.
- *Self-Management (SM)*: The ability to manage emotions and behaviors across different situations and environments and to demonstrate agency as one works to set and achieve personal and collective goals.
- *Social Awareness (SO)*: The understanding of social norms for behavior; the ability to empathize with, respect, and take the perspectives of others; and the feeling of connection and belonging with family, peers, schools, and community groups.
- *Relationship Skills (RS)*: The ability to establish and maintain healthy and positive relationships including effective communication, collaborative problem-solving, negotiating conflict, and demonstrating helpful and supportive behaviors.
- *Responsible Decision Making (RDM)*: The ability to make careful, reliable, and constructive choices about personal and social behavior that are appropriate across diverse situations; to consider the personal, social, and collective impact of one's actions; and to demonstrate curiosity and an open-mindedness to learning.
- *Optimistic Thinking (OT)*: The belief and demonstration of confidence, hopefulness, and positive thinking regarding oneself, others, and one's life situations in the past, present, and future.

This crosswalk highlights the alignment between the Base Indicators of the New York Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks and DESSA assessment items across the six competencies. It demonstrates how the DESSA assessments can be used by districts and schools to ensure every New York student develops the skills to be fully and authentically engaged in their own social and emotional learning, be more connected to school, and become more empowered learners.

Alignment Between the Base Indicators of the New York Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks and DESSA Items

Goal 1: Develop self-awareness that: nurtures and affirms a strong sense of identity, informs decisions about personal actions, and builds a sense of agency.	
<i>Base Indicator</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
1A. Identify and understand their emotions and how emotions relate to their actions. Use understanding of emotions to inform actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize their emotions (<i>SA</i>) • Describe the emotion they were feeling (<i>SA</i>) • Explain what caused their emotions (<i>SA</i>) • Know how their emotions influence their behavior (<i>SA</i>)
1B. Discover and reflect on aspects of personal and group identity such as characteristics, qualities, and interests, including those rooted in culture, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, ability, etc., and identify external resources that support or contribute to identity development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate a sense of who they are and what is important to them (<i>SA</i>) • Show an awareness of their personal strengths (<i>SA</i>) • Work to develop their personal strengths (<i>SA</i>)
1C. Demonstrate skills related to setting and working toward personal and academic goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express high expectations for themselves (<i>OT</i>) • Set goals for themselves (<i>SM</i>) • Believe they can achieve their goals (<i>OT</i>) • Persist to achieve a goal (<i>SM</i>) • Keep trying when unsuccessful (<i>SM</i>)

Goal 2: Use social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain mutually supportive relationships with individuals and groups and nurture a strong sense of belonging.	
<i>Base Indicator</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
2A. Recognize and build empathy for the feelings and perspectives of others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize others' emotions (<i>SO</i>) • Respond to others' feelings in kind and safe ways (<i>SO</i>) • Respect a person's right to have a different perspective (<i>SO</i>)
2B. Recognize and affirm individual identities as well as individual and group similarities and differences, including those rooted in culture, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, ability, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate openness to new situations, experiences, and people (<i>RDM</i>) • Show appreciation of others (<i>SO</i>)

<p>2C: Apply a variety of communication and social skills to interact with individuals and groups across lines of difference.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get along well with different types of people (RS) • Interact positively with classmates (RS) • Listen to others (RS)
<p>2D. Demonstrate the ability to prevent, manage, or resolve conflicts, including those that involve injustice or are related to culture, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, ability, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make others feel welcome or included (SO) • Resolve conflicts positively (RS) • Stand up for a friend or classmate (RS) • Cooperate with others to solve a problem (RS)

<p>Goal 3: Demonstrate intentional decision-making skills and behaviors that consider social, emotional, and physical safety and well-being in personal, family, school, and community contexts.</p>	
<p><i>Base Indicator</i></p>	<p><i>DESSA Items</i></p>
<p>3A: Consider individual and collective social, emotional, and physical safety and well-being, as well as social context in making decisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather information before making an important decision (<i>RDM</i>) • Do the right thing in a difficult situation (<i>RDM</i>) • Believe their contributions to a group or team matter (<i>OT</i>)
<p>3B: Apply decision making skills to influence outcomes and strengthen agency in social and academic life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compromise for the good of the group (<i>RDM</i>) • Believe working with others leads to greater success (<i>OT</i>) • Prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events (<i>RDM</i>)
<p>3C. Take action to support the wellbeing of their school and community, including taking stands against bias and injustice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take action to solve problems (<i>SM</i>) • Contribute to a positive learning environment (<i>SO</i>) • Stand up for a friend or classmate (<i>RS</i>) • Make a positive difference in the world (<i>OT</i>)



The DESSA System from Aperture Education: A Riverside Insights Company is a student resilience system that helps educators measure and strengthen social, emotional, and behavioral skills to reduce challenges that interfere with learning. The DESSA universal screening and supplemental assessments are widely used, practical, evidence-based measures of social and emotional competence of students in grades K-12. These powerful data analytic tools enable educators to identify trends, validate curriculum effectiveness, and drive positive academic and well-being outcomes for students. Robust reporting in the DESSA System provides insights for educators and staff to proactively differentiate instruction using DESSA-provided instructional strategies and tiered intervention resources. The DESSA System's strength-based approach is grounded in resilience theory and designed to bring the whole child into focus. To learn more, visit www.ApertureEd.com.