

Hawaii's HĀ BREATH and DESSA Crosswalk

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In 2015, Hawai'i's Department of Education published [Nā Hopena A'o](#) or HĀ- six outcomes to be strengthened in every student over the course of their K-12 learning journey. The outcomes include a sense of Belonging, Responsibility, Excellence, Aloha, Total Wellbeing and Hawai'i. When taken together, these outcomes become the core BREATH that can be drawn on for strength and stability through out school and beyond.

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 HĀ and DESSA assessment items across the six competencies. It demonstrates how the DESSA assessments can be used by Hawaiian districts and schools to emphasize the competencies that include application and creation of knowledge along with the development of important skills and dispositions.

Alignment between HÅ: BREATH and DESSA Assessment Items

1. Strengthened Sense of Belonging:	
I stand firm in my space with a strong foundation of relationships. A sense of Belonging is demonstrated through an understanding of lineage and place and a connection to past, present, and future. I am able to interact respectfully for the betterment of self and others	
a. Know who I am and where I am from	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can describe the things that matter most to them (SA) • Can list the personal traits that are most important to them (SA) • Speak positively about their future potential (OT) • Express high expectations for themselves (OT)
b. Know about the place I live and go to school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel like they belong at their school (SO)
c. Build relationships with many diverse people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get along well with different types of people (RS) • Good at making and keeping friends (RS) • Interact positively with classmates (RS) • Respect a person's right to have a different perspective (SO)
d. Care about my relationships with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make others feel welcome or included (SO) • Show appreciation for others (SO) • Encourage others (SO)
e. Am open to new ideas and different ways of doing things	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show a willingness to examine their beliefs and opinions (SA) • Demonstrate openness to new situations, experiences, and people (RDM) • Update their thinking as they learn more about something (RDM)
f. Communicate with clarity and confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to others' feelings in kind and safe ways (SO)
g. Understand how actions affect others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept responsibility for their actions (RDM) • Compromise for the good of the group (RDM) • Do nice things for people (RS)
h. Actively participate in school and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make positive contributions to their class, school, or community (SM) • Contribute to creating a positive learning environment (SO) • Help make their class a place where everyone can learn (SO)

2. Strengthened Sense of Responsibility:	
I willingly carry my responsibility for self, family, community and the larger society. A sense of Responsibility is demonstrated by a commitment and concern for others. I am mindful of the values, needs and welfare of others.	
a. Come to school regularly, on-time and ready to learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to and follow expectations for their behavior (<i>SO</i>) • Prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events (<i>RDM</i>)
b. See self and others as active participants in the learning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help make their class a place where everyone can learn (<i>SO</i>) • Cooperate with others to solve a problem (<i>RS</i>) • Seek out things that challenge them (<i>OT</i>)
c. Question ideas and listens generously	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to others (<i>RS</i>) • Respect a person's right to have a different opinion (<i>RS</i>) • Ask questions when learning new things (<i>RDM</i>) • Update their thinking as they learn more about something (<i>RDM</i>)
d. Ask for help and feedback when appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel comfortable asking for help when they don't understand something (<i>SA</i>) • Ask for advice when needed (<i>RDM</i>) • Listen to feedback so they can improve (<i>SA</i>)
e. Make good decisions with moral courage and integrity in every action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the right thing in a difficult situation (<i>RDM</i>) • Gather information before making an important decision (<i>RDM</i>) • Accept responsibility for their actions (<i>RDM</i>)
f. Set goals and complete tasks fully	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set goals for themselves (<i>SM</i>) • Persist to achieve a goal (<i>SM</i>) • Believe they can achieve their goals (<i>SM</i>)
h. Honor and make family, school, and communities proud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can make a positive difference in the world (<i>OT</i>) • Make positive contributions to their class, school, or community (<i>SM</i>) • Expect that they will be successful (<i>OT</i>)

3. Strengthened Sense of Excellence:	
I believe I can succeed in school and life and am inspired to care about the quality of my work. A sense of Excellence is demonstrated by a love of learning and the pursuit of skills, knowledge and behaviors to reach my potential. I am able to take intellectual risks and strive beyond what is expected.	
a. Define success in a meaningful way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can imagine a positive future for themselves (<i>OT</i>) • Express high expectations for themselves (<i>OT</i>) • Believe they can achieve their goals (<i>OT</i>)
b. Know and apply unique gifts and abilities to a purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize their strengths (<i>SA</i>) • Can list the personal traits that are most important to them (<i>SA</i>) • Can make a positive difference in the world (<i>OT</i>) • Make positive contributions to their class, school, or community (<i>SM</i>)
c. Prioritize and manage time and energy well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay focused despite a distraction (<i>SM</i>) • Can motivate themselves when they don't want to do something (<i>SM</i>)
d. Take initiative without being asked	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take action to solve problems (<i>SM</i>) • Prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events (<i>RDM</i>) • Contribute to group or team goals (<i>SM</i>)
e. Explore many areas of interest and initiate new ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek out things that challenge them (<i>OT</i>) • Describe the things that matter most to them (<i>SA</i>) • Demonstrate openness to new situations, experiences, or people (<i>RDM</i>)
f. Utilize creativity and imagination to problem-solve and innovate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show a willingness to examine their beliefs and opinions (<i>SA</i>) • Update their thinking as they learn more about something (<i>RDM</i>)
g. See failure as an opportunity to learn well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept that making mistakes is part of learning (<i>OT</i>) • View negative outcomes as a learning opportunity (<i>OT</i>) • Believe they can overcome setbacks (<i>OT</i>)
h. Assess and make improvements to produce quality work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to feedback so they can improve (<i>SA</i>) • Work to develop their personal strengths (<i>SA</i>) • Keep trying when unsuccessful (<i>SM</i>)

4. Strengthened Sense of Aloha:	
I show care and respect for myself, families, and communities. A sense of Aloha is demonstrated through empathy and appreciation for the symbiotic relationship between all. I am able to build trust and lead for the good of the whole.	
a. Give generously of time and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to others (RS) • Help make their class a place where everyone can learn (SO)
b. Appreciate the gifts and abilities of others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show appreciation for others (SO) • Compliment or congratulate others (RS)
c. Make others feel comfortable and welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make others feel welcome or included (SO) • Contribute to creating a positive learning environment (SO)
d. Communicate effectively to diverse audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect a person's right to have a different perspective (SO) • Get along well with different types of people (RS)
e. Respond mindfully to what is needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize others' emotions (SO) • Respond to others' feelings in kind and safe ways (SO) • Stand up for friend or classmate (RS) • Adjust their behavior to match different settings (SO)
f. Give joyfully without expectation of reward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make positive contributions to their class, school, or community (SM) • Do nice things for people (RS)
g. Share the responsibility for collective work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to group or team goals (SM) • Cooperate with others so solve a problem (RS)
h. Spread happiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage others (RS) • Interact positively with classmates (RS)

5. Strengthened Sense of Total Well-being:	
I believe I can succeed in school and life and am inspired to care about the quality of my work. A sense of Excellence is demonstrated by a love of learning and the pursuit of skills, knowledge and behaviors to reach my potential. I am able to take intellectual risks and strive beyond what is expected.	
a. Feel safe physically and emotionally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel like they belong in their school (SO) • Accept that making mistakes is part of learning (OT) • Focus on the positive aspects of a situation (OT)

b. Develop self-discipline to make good choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay focused despite a distraction (<i>SM</i>) • Agree to and follow expectations for their behavior (<i>SO</i>) • Do the right thing in a difficult situation (<i>RDM</i>) • Think before they acted (<i>RDM</i>)
c. Manage stress and frustration levels appropriately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt well to new situations (<i>SM</i>) • Can calm down when they're upset • Stay calm when faced with a challenge (<i>SM</i>)
d. Have goals and plans that support healthy habits, fitness and behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set goals for themselves (<i>SM</i>) • Keep working until they achieve a goal (<i>SM</i>) • Believe they can achieve their goals (<i>OT</i>) • Express high expectations for themselves (<i>OT</i>)
e. Utilize the resources available for wellness in everything and everywhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel comfortable asking for help when they don't understand something (<i>SA</i>) • Ask for advice when needed (<i>RDM</i>) • Gather information before making an important decision (<i>RDM</i>)
f. Have enough energy to get things done daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can motivate themselves when they don't want to do something (<i>SM</i>) • Take action to solve problems (<i>SM</i>) • Prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events (<i>RDM</i>) • Work carefully on projects or schoolwork (<i>SM</i>)
g. Engage in positive, social interactions and has supportive relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make others feel welcome or included (<i>SO</i>) • Get along well with different types of people (<i>RS</i>) • Good at making and keeping friends (<i>RS</i>) • Do nice things for people (<i>RS</i>) • Resolve conflicts positively (<i>RS</i>)
h. Promote wellness in others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage others (<i>SM</i>) • Make positive contributions to their class, school, or community (<i>SM</i>)

6. Strengthened Sense of Hawai'i:

I am enriched by the uniqueness of this prized place. A sense of Hawai'i is demonstrated through an appreciation for its rich history, diversity and indigenous language and culture. I am able to navigate effectively across cultures and communities and be a steward of the homeland.

- a. Pronounce and understand Hawaiian everyday conversational words
- b. Use Hawaiian words appropriate to their task
- c. Learn the names, stories, special characteristics and the importance of places in Hawai'i
- d. Learn and apply Hawaiian traditional world view and knowledge in contemporary settings
- e. Share the histories, stories, cultures and languages of Hawai'i
- f. Compare and contrast different points of views, cultures and their contributions
- g. Treat Hawai'i with pride and respect
- h. Call Hawai'i home

- Demonstrate a sense of who they are and what is important to them (SA)
- Make positive contributions to their class, school, or community (SM)
- Listen to others (RS)
- Demonstrate openness to new situations, experiences, and people (SA)
- Make others feel welcome or included (SO)
- Show appreciation for others (SO)
- Respect a person's right to have a different perspective (RS)



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.