

Illinois Social and Emotional Standards and DESSA Crosswalk

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The [Illinois Social and Emotional Learning \(SEL\) Standards](#) were developed as a result of the Children's Mental Health Act of 2003 and include 10 Learning Standards across three different goals. These standards can help inform quality SEL instruction and the integration of SEL into school systems, ultimately promoting student wellness and success.

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 10 SEL Learning Standards and DESSA assessment items. This tool can help support the integration of SEL throughout the school day and help ensure every student in Illinois has the skills they need to succeed.

Alignment between Illinois SEL Standards and DESSA Items

Goal 1: Develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success.	
<i>Learning Standard</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
A. Identify and manage one's emotions and behavior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the emotion they were feeling (SA) • Explain what caused their emotions (SA) • Know how their emotions influence their behavior (SA) • Can tell when their emotions make it hard to pay attention (SA) • Motivate themselves when they don't want to do something (SM) • Can calm down when they're upset • Stay focused despite a distraction (SM)
B. Recognize personal qualities and external supports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate a sense of who they are and what is important to them (SA) • Show an awareness of their personal strengths (SA) • Ask questions when they did not understand something (SA) • Feel comfortable being themselves in different situations (SA) • Ask for advice when needed (RDM)
C. Demonstrate skills related to achieving personal and academic goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set goals for themselves (SM) • Seek out challenging tasks (OT) • Believe they can achieve their goals (OT) • Expect that they will be successful (OT) • Can imagine a positive future for themselves (OT) • Work to develop their personal strengths (SA) • Keep working until they achieve a goal (SM) • Listen to feedback so they can improve (SA) • Contribute to group or team goals (SM)

Goal 2: Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships.	
<i>Learning Standard</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
A. Recognize the feelings and perspectives of others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize others' emotions (SO) • Respect a persons' right to have a different perspective (SO) • Respond to others' feelings in kind and safe ways (SO)
B. Recognize individual and group similarities and differences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get along with different types of people (RS) • Make others feel welcome or included (SO) • Stand up for a friend or classmate (RS) • Demonstrate openness to new situations, experiences, and people (RDM)
C. Use communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to creating a positive learning environment (SO) • Interact positively with classmates (RS) • Do nice things for people (RS) • Encourage others (RS) • Listen to others (RS) • Compliment or congratulate others (RS) • Good are making and keeping friends (RS)
D. Demonstrate an ability to prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolve conflicts positively (RS) • Cooperate with others to solve a problem (RS) • Compromise for the good of the group (RDM) • Believe their contributions to a group or team matter (OT)

Goal 3: Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts.	
<i>Learning Standard</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
A. Consider ethical, safety, and societal factors in making decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the right thing in a difficult situation (<i>RDM</i>) • Accept responsibility for their actions (<i>RDM</i>) • Agree to and follow expectations for their behavior (<i>SO</i>) • Express high expectations for themselves (<i>OT</i>)
B. Apply decision-making skills to deal responsibly with daily academic and social situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather information before making an important decision (<i>RDM</i>) • Update their thinking as they learn more about something (<i>RDM</i>) • Prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events (<i>RDM</i>)
C. Contribute to the well-being of one's school and community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can make a positive difference in the world (<i>OT</i>) • Believe working with others leads to greater success (<i>OT</i>) • Contribute to creating a positive learning environment (<i>RDM</i>) • Help make their class a place where everyone can learn (<i>RDM</i>) • Adjust their behavior to match different settings (<i>RDM</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.