

Kentucky Portrait of a Learner and DESSA Crosswalk

September 2024

The [Kentucky Portrait of a Learner](#) framework, updated with performance outcomes in 2024, articulates the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary for student success in their academic, personal and professional lives. Public school districts can use the measurable and observable competencies and performance outcomes to help ensure all students in grades kindergarten through 12 apply their learning, demonstrate mastery and adapt to various situations.

The DESSA suite of assessments measures key social and emotional competencies essential for student success now and into the future. The DESSA assessments span K-12 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.

This crosswalk highlights the alignment between the Kentucky Portrait of a Learner Competencies and the DESSA assessment items and demonstrates how the DESSA assessments can be used by districts and schools to ensure every Kentuckian develops the skills to be prepared for life after graduation.

Alignment Between the Kentucky Portrait of a Learner Performance Outcome and DESSA Items

Engaged Citizen	
<i>Shows respect and empathy across differences, embraces diversity of opinion, seeks cultural understanding, participates in the democratic process to challenge the status quo, and makes a positive impact on their community and the world.</i>	
<i>Performance Outcomes</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
Demonstrates empathy and respect for diversity, culture and opinions of others through responsible actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respect a person's right to have a different perspective• Make others feel welcome or included• Get along well with different types of people• Demonstrate openness to new situations, experiences, and people
Utilizes democratic processes to take an active role and impact change in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make positive contributions to their class, school, or community• Take action to solve problems• Believe they can make a positive difference in the world• Demonstrate a sense of who they are and what is important to them

Recognizes, plans and engages in civic opportunities to impact the community in a positive, productive way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make positive contributions to their class, school, or community • Take action to solve problems • Believe they can make a positive difference in the world • Contribute to group or team goals • Cooperate with others to solve a problem
Demonstrates safe, legal, ethical behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to and follow expectations for their behavior • Do the right thing in a difficult situation • Accept responsibility for their actions • Think before they act

Productive Collaborator	
<i>Engages with others to achieve a common goal through building positive relationships, actively listening, showing empathy and making individual contributions to a larger group.</i>	
<i>Performance Outcomes</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
Uses cooperative processes to make decisions and achieve desired outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to group or team goals • Cooperate with others to solve a problem • Believe working with others leads to greater success
Recognizes individual contributions and the contributions of others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept responsibility for their actions • Show appreciation for others
Engages with different perspectives/ideas to develop empathy and resolve conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolve conflicts positively • Respect a person's right to have a different perspective
Gives, receives and implements constructive feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to feedback so they can improve • Seek out challenging tasks • Compliment or congratulate others

Empowered Learner	
<i>Demonstrates mastery and application of academic competencies. Develops the skills and dispositions to persist through difficulties and plan for a future of self-improvement.</i>	
<i>Performance Outcomes</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
Connects and applies knowledge and skills across disciplines and to authentic contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update their thinking as they learn more about something • Show a willingness to examine their beliefs and opinions
Identifies learning needs and preferences; uses a set of strategies to master academic and personal goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions when they did not understand something • Persist to achieve a goal • Believe they can achieve their goals
Uses challenges and mistakes as opportunities to learn and improve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept that making mistakes is part of learning • View negative outcomes as a learning opportunity • Seek out challenging tasks • Work to develop their personal strengths

Effective Communicator	
<i>Engages diverse audiences respectfully by exchanging ideas and information responsibly, listening actively, speaking and writing clearly, and using print and digital media appropriately</i>	
<i>Performance Outcomes</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
Conveys the message clearly and coherently according to the purpose, task and audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjust their behavior to match different settings • Help make their class a place where everyone can learn
Uses relevant details, organization and conventions to develop ideas coherently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events • Gathering information before making an important decision
Assesses needs of the audience and purpose of communication to adapt word choice, tone, style and body language to a variety of contexts and tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather information before making an important decision • Adjust their behavior to match different settings
Demonstrates use of multiple media and technologies to present clear and coherent ideas in a variety of forms of communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events • Adapt well to new situations
Demonstrates active listening to analyze messages from discussions, presentations and audio-visual sources to determine and evaluate meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to others • Ask questions when learning new things

Critical Thinker	
<i>Thinks deeply and makes informed decisions to create solutions or new understanding supported by relevant and reliable evidence.</i>	
<i>Performance Outcomes</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
Generates relevant questions or problems based on research, observations and personal experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather information before making an important decision • Ask questions when they did not understand something
Identifies reliable evidence and evaluates information from a variety of sources with multiple perspectives to draw conclusions and to construct explanations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can update their thinking as they learn more about something
Analyzes complex problems and designs multiple and/or original solutions, testing (evaluating) them against relevant criteria and considering feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to feedback so they can improve • Take action to solve problems
Constructs work that demonstrates thoughtful, creative approaches and evaluates the impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather information before making an important decision • Work carefully on projects or schoolwork

Creative Contributor	
<i>Interprets experiences, imagines and plays with new possibilities with curiosity and creates approaches that are novel, useful and valued by the world around them</i>	
<i>Performance Outcomes</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
Analyzes situations and notices unique connections to generate ideas for solving a problem, addressing an issue or making something new	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather information before making an important situation • Take action to solve problems • Contribute to creating a positive learning environment • Cooperate with others to solve a problem
Explores new learning and insights and experiments with multiple relevant and viable possibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions when learning new things • Demonstrate openness to new situations, experiences, and people • Work carefully on projects or schoolwork
Creates original products and processes that contribute to positive and authentic change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update their thinking as they learn more about something

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Believe they can make a positive difference in the world• Make positive contributions to their class, school, or community
--	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



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.