

Minnesota's SEL Framework and DESSA Crosswalk

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In their [SEL Framework](#), the Minnesota Department of Education defines each of five SEL competencies separately and outlines learning goals under each competency, which set expectations for what students should learn and be able to do for each of the competencies. Implementing SEL on a macro-level in schools creates more equitable, better-performing schools and communities. This type of systemic change creates school environments in which all students learn the skills they need to be prepared for career, college and life.

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 Minnesota SEL Competencies and Learning Goals and DESSA assessment items across the six competencies. It demonstrates how the DESSA assessments can be used by districts and schools to help students learn to: be caring and civil; make healthy decisions; problem-solve effectively; value excellence; be respectful and responsible; be good citizens; and be empathic and ethical individuals.

Alignment between Minnesota SEL Framework and DESSA Items

Self-Awareness The ability to accurately recognize one's emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior. This includes accurately assessing one's strengths and limitations, and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism.	
<i>Learning Goals</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
1. Demonstrates an awareness and understanding of own emotions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize their emotions (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)
2. Demonstrates awareness of personal strengths, challenges, aspirations and cultural, linguistic, and community assets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize their strengths (SA) • Describe the things that matter most to them (SA) • Can list the personal traits that are most important to them (SA) • Work to develop their personal strengths (SA) • Seek out things that challenge them (OT) • Believe they can overcome setbacks (OT) • Speak positive about their future potential (OT)
3. Demonstrates awareness of personal rights and responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel comfortable being themselves in different situations (SA) • Feel comfortable asking for help when they don't understand something (SA) • Express high expectations for themselves (OT) • Can make a positive difference in the world (OT) • Make positive contributions to their class, school, or community (SM) • Accept responsibility for their actions (RDM)

Self-Management

The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward achieving personal and academic goals.

<i>Learning Goals</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
1. Demonstrates the skills to manage and express their emotions, thoughts, impulses and stress in effective ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stay focused despite a distraction (SM)• Think before they acted (SM)• Stay calm when faced with a challenge (SM)• Can calm down when they're upset (SM)• Adapt well to new situations (SM)• Can motivate themselves when they don't want to do something (SM)
2. Demonstrates the skills to set, monitor, adapt, achieve and evaluate goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set goals for themselves (SM)• Take action to solve problems (SM)• Persist to achieve a goal (SM)• Keep trying when unsuccessful (SM)• Contribute to group or team goals (SM)• Work carefully on projects or schoolwork (SM)

Social Awareness

The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

<i>Learning Goals</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
1. Demonstrates awareness of and empathy for individuals, their emotions, experiences and perspectives through a cross-cultural lens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize others' emotions (SO)• Respond to others' feelings in kind and safe ways (SO)• Respect a person's right to have a different perspective (SO)
2. Demonstrates awareness and respect of groups and their cultures, languages, identities, traditions, values and histories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make others feel welcome or included (SO)• Show appreciation for others (SO)• Demonstrate openness to new situations, experiences, and people (RDM)

3. Demonstrates awareness of how individuals and groups cooperate toward achieving common goals and ideals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to creating a positive learning environment (SO) • Cooperate with others to solve a problem (RS) • Believe working with others leads to greater success (OT) • Believe their contributions to a group or team matter (OT) • Can make a positive difference in the world (OT)
4. Demonstrates awareness of external supports and when supports are needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for advice when needed (RDM) • Feel comfortable asking for help when they don't understand something (SA)

Relationship Skills The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. This includes communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed.	
<i>Learning Goals</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
1. Demonstrates a range of communication and social skills to interact effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interact positively with classmates (RS) • Encourage others (RS) • Listen to others (RS) • Compliment or congratulate others (RS)
2. Cultivates constructive relationships with others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get along well with different types of people (RS) • Good at making and keeping friends (RS) • Do nice things for people (RS)
3. Identifies and demonstrates approaches to addressing interpersonal conflict.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolve conflicts positively (RS) • Stand up for a friend or classmate (RS)

Responsible Decision-Making

The ability to accurately recognize one's emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior. This includes accurately assessing one's strengths and limitations, and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism.

<i>Learning Goals</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
1. Considers ethical standards, social and community norms and safety concerns 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>)• Compromise for the good of the group (<i>RDM</i>)• Adjust their behavior to match different settings (<i>SO</i>)• Agree to and follow expectations for their behavior (<i>SO</i>)
2. Applies and evaluates decision-making skills to engage in a variety of situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gather information before making an important decision (<i>RDM</i>)• Ask questions when learning new things (<i>RDM</i>)• Prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events (<i>RDM</i>)• Update their thinking as they learn more about something (<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.