

Pennsylvania Career Ready Skills and DESSA Crosswalk

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In 2018, the PA Department of Education launched the [Pennsylvania Career Ready Skills](#) to support students in navigating relationships between family, school, post-secondary education and/or career in preparation for life as a global citizen. These skills are foundational for successful learning and engagement in school programs (including academic and extra-curricular involvement) and are necessary for developing learning, empathy, emotion management, friendship skills and problem solving.

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 Pennsylvania Career Ready Skills Categories and Related Employability Skills, informed by the grade-banded Skills Continuum, and DESSA assessment items across the six competencies. It demonstrates how the DESSA assessments can be used by districts and schools to prepare students to be successful members of their school community, future workplace, and in life.

Alignment between the PA Career Readiness Skills Categories and DESSA Items

Self-Awareness and Self-Management <i>Recognize and regulate emotions</i> Related Employability Skills: Respect, Dependability & Reliability, Communication, Professionalism, Teamwork, Integrity, Business Fundamentals, Adaptability, Initiative, Planning, Organizing	
<i>PA CRS Grade Band</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
Pre-K – K <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize and label basic feelings Demonstrate awareness of self and one's own preferences Distinguish between situations that elicit positive or negative feelings Express a want and the means to achieve it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize their emotions (SA) Explain what caused their emotions (SA) Describe the things that matter most to them (SA) Set goals for themselves (SM) Take action to solve problems (SM)
Grades 1-5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify different ways of expressing a feeling Identify one's own strengths, needs, and preferences Select coping skill strategies response to adverse situation (e.g., positive self-talk, talking to others, taking a break, taking care of oneself, avoiding negative self-talk) Distinguish among and set short term, mid-range, and long-term goals 	<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) Speak positively about their future potential (OT) Can calm down when they're upset (SM) Can motivate themselves when they don't want to do something (SM) Set goals for themselves (SM)
Grades 6-8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify behavioral expressions of feelings within a context Explain to others one's own strengths, needs, and preferences specific to a context Identify and select coping skills relevant to adverse situations Identify and evaluate distractors that impact reaching ones' goals 	<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) Can tell when their emotions make it hard to pay attention (SA) Feel comfortable asking for help when they don't understand something (SA) Can calm down when they're upset (SM) Can motivate themselves when they don't want to do something (SM) Persist to achieve a goal (SM) Keep trying when unsuccessful (SM) Stay focused despite a distraction (SM)

<p>Grades 9-12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate behaviors in relation to the impact on self and others • Advocate for oneself in education, employment, and within the community • Analyze adverse situations for the purpose of identifying and selecting healthy coping skills • Establish and pursue goals or post-secondary education, employment, and living within the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel comfortable asking for help when they don't understand something (SA) • Can calm down when they're upset (SM) • Can motivate themselves when they don't want to do something (SM) • Set goals for themselves • Persist to achieve a goal (SM) • Keep trying when unsuccessful (SM) • Believe they can achieve their goals (OT) • Speak positively about their future potential (OT) • Express high expectations for themselves (OT) • Stay focused despite a distraction (SM) • Can compromise for the good of the group (RDM) • Accept responsibility for their actions (RDM) • Stand up for a friend or classmate (RS)
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<p>B. Establishing and Maintaining Relationships <i>Communicate and collaborate amongst diversity</i> Related Employability Skills: Problem solving, Decision making, Critical Thinking, Integrity, Teamwork, Adaptability, Professionalism, Communication, Respect</p>	
<i>PA CRS Grade Band</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
<p>Pre-K – K</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interact in pro-social ways (e.g., reciprocal conversation, turn taking, sharing) with peers and adults • Identify similarities and differences between self and others • Engage in reciprocal communication with peers and adults • Recognize that conflict occurs and identify ways to respond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interact positively with classmates (RS) • Listen to others (RS) • Compliment or congratulate others (RS) • Resolve conflicts positively (RS)

<p>Grades 1-5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain ways to establish relationships that are positive and supportive of others • Demonstrate respect for the uniqueness of others • Select and utilize expressive communication strategies (e.g., tone, body language, facial expressions) with an understanding of its effect on others • Identify multiple ways to solve conflicts and practice solving problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interact positively with classmates (RS) • Respect a person's right to have a different perspective (SO) • Get along well with different types of people (RS) • Demonstrate openness to new situations, experiences, and people (RDM) • Respond to others' feelings in kind and safe ways (SO) • Cooperate with others to solve a problem (SO) • Resolve conflicts positively (SO)
<p>Grades 6-8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how empathy and perspective taking foster relationship building • Interact with others demonstrating respect, cooperation, and acceptance • Explain how expressive communication strategies can affect others • Identify conflict resolution skills to deescalate, diffuse, and resolve differences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize others' emotions (SO) • Respect a person's right to have a different perspective (SO) • Interact positively with classmates (RS) • Do nice things for people (RS) • Respond to others' feelings in kind and safe ways (SO) • Cooperate with others to solve a problem (SO) • Resolve conflicts positively (SO)
<p>Grades 9-12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish pro-social relationships to support self and others • Explain how you situate yourself in a diverse community • Select expressive communication strategies specific to context • Evaluate a situation to identify skills and strategies to prevent and resolve conflicts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interact positively with classmates (RS) • Good at making and keeping friends (RS) • Respond to others' feelings in kind and safe ways (SO) • Get along well with different types of people (RS) • Cooperate with others to solve a problem (SO) • Resolve conflicts positively (SO)

C. Social Problem-Solving Skills

Demonstrate empathy and respectful choice

Related Employability Skills: Teamwork, Integrity, Communication, Respect, Customer Focus, Critical Thinking, Professionalism, Reading, Writing, Problem Solving, Planning, Organizing

<i>PA CRS Grade Band</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
Pre-K-K <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge the consequences of choices Identify similarities and differences of various social contexts Recognize and respond to the feelings of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the right thing in a difficult situation (<i>RDM</i>) Adapt well to new situations (<i>SM</i>) Recognize others' emotions (<i>SO</i>) Respond to others' feelings in kind and safe ways (<i>SO</i>)
Grades 1-5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify consequences of a decision to oneself and others prior to action Identify possible behaviors and anticipate reactions to a specific social context Respond to others given a sense of the others' point of view 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the right thing in a difficult situation (<i>RDM</i>) Compromise for the good of the group (<i>RDM</i>) Agree to and follow expectations for their behavior (<i>SO</i>) Respond to others' feelings in kind and safe ways (<i>SO</i>) Respect a person's right to have a different opinion (<i>SO</i>)
Grades 6-8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a decision based upon anticipated consequences Distinguish among various social contexts and how they impact personal feelings Analyze various perspectives on a situation 	<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>) Explain what caused their emotions (<i>SA</i>) Respect a person's right to have a different perspective (<i>SO</i>) Gather information before making an important decision (<i>RDM</i>)
Grades 9-12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate consequences from a personal, and civic perspective to inform decision-making Situate self in any social context as a means to determine a response Evaluate how societal conventions may influence the perspectives of individuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the right thing in a difficult situation (<i>RDM</i>) Make a positive difference in the world (<i>OT</i>) Make positive contributions to their class, school, or community (<i>SO</i>) Respect a person's right to have a different perspective (<i>SO</i>) Demonstrate openness to new situations, experiences, and people (<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.