

Tennessee's Social and Personal Competencies and DESSA Crosswalk

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Tennessee's Social and Personal Competencies (SPC) are a set of skills that empower children and adults to be successful in life. Published in 2017 by the Tennessee Department of Education, the social and personal competencies were a response to better engage students in their academic preparations, personal and social development, and workforce readiness.

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 Tennessee Social and Personal Competencies and Dimensions and DESSA assessment items. This tool can help support the integration of these competencies throughout the school day to support Tennessee graduates to have the knowledge, abilities, and habits to enter and complete postsecondary education and move to a successful career.

Alignment between the Tennessee Social and Personal Competencies and DESSA Items

1. Self-Awareness Self-awareness is the ability to accurately recognize one's emotions, thoughts, and values and their influence on behavior. This includes accurately assessing one's strengths and limitations and possessing a grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a "growth mindset."	
<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
1A. Demonstrate an awareness of his/her emotions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize their emotions (SA) • 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)
1B. Demonstrate an awareness of his/her personal qualities and interests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the things that matter most to them (SA) • List the personal traits that are most important to them (SA)
1C. Demonstrate an awareness of his/her strengths and limitations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show an awareness of their personal strengths (SA) • Listen to feedback so they can improve (SA) • Work to develop their personal strengths (SA) • Seek out things that challenge them (OT)
1D. Demonstrate a sense of personal responsibility and advocacy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel comfortable being themselves in different situations (SA) • Imagine a positive future for themselves (OT) • Believe they can make a positive difference in the world (OT) • Expect that they will be successful (OT)
1E. Identify external and community resources and supports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel comfortable asking for help when they don't understand something (SA)

2. Self-Management

Self-management is 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>Dimensions</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
2A. Understand and use strategies for managing his/her emotions and behaviors constructively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think before they acted (SM) • Stay focused despite a distraction (SM) • Motivate themselves when they don't want to do something (SM) • Calm down when they're upset (SM) • Stay calm when faced with a challenge (SM)
2B. Set, monitor, adapt, and evaluate his/her goals to achieve success in school and life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set goals for themselves (SM) • Take action to solve problems (SM) • Adapt well to new situations (SM) • Contribute to group or team goals (SM) • Persist to achieve a goal (SM) • Keep trying when unsuccessful (SM) • Believe they can achieve their goals (OT) • Believe they can overcome setbacks (OT) • View negative outcomes as a learning opportunity (OT)

3. Social Awareness

Social awareness is the **ability to understand the perspective of others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize and practice civic responsibility in family, school, and community**.

<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
3A. Demonstrate awareness and consideration of other people's emotions, perspectives, and social cues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize others' emotions (SO) • Show appreciation for others (SO) • Respond to others' feelings in kind and safe ways (SO) • Adjust their behavior to match different settings (SO)

3B. Exhibit civic responsibility in multiple settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make others feel welcome or included (SO) • Contribute to creating a positive learning environment (SO) • Help make their class a place where everyone can learn (SO) • Agree to and follow expectations for their behavior (SO) • Believe their contributions to a group or team matter (OT) • Can make a positive difference in the world (OT)
3C. Demonstrate an awareness and respect for human dignity, including culture and differences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect a person's right to have a different perspective (SO)

4. Relationship Skills Relationships skills are the ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. This includes communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting unwanted or inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed.	
<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
4A. Use positive communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interact positively with classmates (RS) • Encourage their friends or classmates (RS) • Listen to others (RS) • Compliment or congratulate others (RS) • Do nice things for people (RS)
4B. Develop and maintain positive relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get along well with different types of people (RS) • Good at making and keeping friends (RS)
4C. Demonstrate an ability to prevent, manage, and/or resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get along well with different types of people (RS) • Resolve conflicts positively (RS) • Cooperate with others to solve a problem (RS) • Stand up for a friend or classmate (RS) • Believe working with others leads to greater success (OT)

5. Responsible Decision-Making

The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions within the context of ethical standards, safety concerns and social norms. It involves making realistic evaluations of the consequences of one's actions and a consideration of the well-being of self and others.

<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
E1: Develop, implement, and model effective decision and critical thinking skills	<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>)
E2: Identify potential outcomes to help make constructive decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events (<i>RDM</i>)• Ask for advice when needed (<i>RDM</i>)• Imagine a positive future for themselves (<i>OT</i>)
E3: Consider the ethical and civic impact of decisions	<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>)• Accept responsibility for their actions (<i>RDM</i>)• Can make a positive difference in the world (<i>OT</i>)
E4: Explore and approach new situations with an open mind and curiosity while recognizing that some outcomes are not certain or comfortable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate openness to new situations, experiences, and people (<i>RDM</i>)• Ask questions when learning new things (<i>RDM</i>)• Update their thinking as they learn more about something (<i>RDM</i>)• Seek out things that challenge them (<i>OT</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.