

# Wisconsin's Social Emotional Learning Standards and DESSA Crosswalk

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[The Washington Social Emotional Learning Standards, Benchmarks, and Indicators](#) provide a scaffolded framework identifying observable developmental benchmarks and indicators. Educators can use this document to reference developmentally appropriate examples of student social emotional learning (SEL) and support students who are empowered and encouraged to use their own voice to the greatest extent possible in taking charge of their own social emotional development.

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 12<sup>th</sup> 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 Washington Social Emotional Learning Standards, Benchmarks, and Indicators and DESSA assessment items across the six competencies. It demonstrates how the DESSA assessments can be used by districts and schools to ensure every Washington student develops the skills to be fully and authentically engaged in their own social and emotional learning, be more connected to school, and become more empowered learners.

<b>Standard 1: Self-Awareness</b> Individual can identify their emotions, personal assets, areas for growth, and potential external resources and supports.	
<i>Benchmarks</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
Benchmark 1A: Demonstrates awareness and understanding of one's own emotions and emotions' influence on behavior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize their emotions (SA)</li> <li>• Describe the emotion they were feeling (SA)</li> <li>• Explain what caused their emotions (SA)</li> <li>• Know how their emotions influence their behavior (SA)</li> <li>• Can tell when their emotions make it hard to pay attention (SA)</li> </ul>
Benchmark 1B: Demonstrates awareness of personal and collective identity encompassing strengths, areas for growth, aspirations, and cultural and linguistic assets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize their strengths (SA)</li> <li>• Work to develop their personal strengths (SA)</li> <li>• Can describe the things that matter most to them (SA)</li> <li>• Can list the personal traits that are most important to them (SA)</li> <li>• Feel comfortable asking for help when they don't understand something (SA)</li> <li>• Listen to feedback so they can improve (SA)</li> <li>• Show a willingness to examine their beliefs and opinions (SA)</li> </ul>
Benchmark 1C: Demonstrates self-awareness and understanding of external influences, e.g., culture, family, school, and community resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feel comfortable being themselves in different situations (SA)</li> <li>• Believe working with others leads to greater success (OT)</li> <li>• Believe their contributions to a group or team matter (OT)</li> </ul>

<b>Standard 2: Self-Management</b> Individual can regulate emotions, thoughts, and behaviors	
<i>Benchmarks</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
Benchmark 2A: Demonstrates the skills to manage one's emotions, thoughts, impulses, and stress in constructive ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think before they acted (SM)</li> <li>• Can motivate themselves when they don't want to do something (SM)</li> <li>• Can calm down when they're upset (SM)</li> <li>• Stay calm when faced with a challenge (SM)</li> <li>• Adapt well to new situations (SM)</li> <li>• Work carefully on projects or schoolwork (SM)</li> </ul>

Benchmark 2B: Demonstrates responsible decision-making and problem-solving skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather information before making an important decision (<i>RDM</i>)</li> <li>• Ask for advice when needed (<i>RDM</i>)</li> <li>• Ask questions when learning new things (<i>RDM</i>)</li> <li>• Take action to solve problems (<i>SM</i>)</li> <li>• Do the right thing in a difficult situation (<i>RDM</i>)</li> <li>• Show a willingness to update their thinking (<i>RDM</i>)</li> </ul>
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<b>Standard 3: Self-Efficacy</b> Individual can motivate themselves, persevere, and see themselves as capable.	
<i>Benchmarks</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
Benchmark 3A: Demonstrates the skills to set, monitor, adapt, persevere, achieve, and evaluate goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set goals for themselves (<i>SM</i>)</li> <li>• Contribute to group or team goals (<i>SM</i>)</li> <li>• Keep trying when unsuccessful (<i>SM</i>)</li> <li>• Persist to achieve a goal (<i>SM</i>)</li> <li>• Believe they can achieve their goals (<i>OT</i>)</li> <li>• Expect that they will be successful (<i>OT</i>)</li> <li>• Speak positively about their future potential (<i>OT</i>)</li> </ul>
Benchmark 3B: Demonstrates problem-solving skills to engage responsibly in a variety of situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take action to solve problems (<i>SM</i>)</li> <li>• Accept responsibility for their actions (<i>RDM</i>)</li> <li>• Adapt well to different situations (<i>SM</i>)</li> <li>• Adjust their behavior to match different settings (<i>SO</i>)</li> </ul>
Benchmark 3C: Demonstrates awareness and ability to speak on behalf of personal rights and advocacy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feel comfortable asking for help when they don't understand something (<i>SA</i>)</li> <li>• Demonstrate a sense of who they are and what is important to them (<i>SA</i>)</li> </ul>

<b>Standard 4: Social Awareness</b> Individual can take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures.	
<i>Benchmarks</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
Benchmark 4A: Demonstrates awareness of other people's emotions, perspectives, cultures, languages, histories, identities, and abilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize others' emotions (<i>SO</i>)</li> <li>• Respond to others' feelings in kind and safe ways (<i>SO</i>)</li> <li>• Demonstrate openness to new situations, experiences, and people (<i>RDM</i>)</li> <li>• Show appreciation for others (<i>SO</i>)</li> </ul>

Benchmark 4B: Demonstrates an awareness and respect for similarities and differences among community, cultural and social groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make others feel welcome or included (SO)</li> <li>• Contribute to creating a positive learning environment (SO)</li> <li>• Respect a person's right to have a different perspective (SO)</li> <li>• Get along well with different types of people (RS)</li> <li>• Show appreciation for others (SO)</li> </ul>
Benchmark 4C: Demonstrates an understanding of the variation within and across cultures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect a person's right to have a different perspective (SO)</li> <li>• Get along well with different types of people (RS)</li> <li>• Show appreciation for others (SO)</li> </ul>

<b>Standard 5: Social Management</b> Individual can make safe and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions	
<i>Benchmarks</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
Benchmark 5A: Demonstrates a range of communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interact positively with classmates (RS)</li> <li>• Get along well with different types of people (RS)</li> <li>• Listen to others (RS)</li> <li>• Compliment or congratulate others (RS)</li> <li>• Do nice things for people (RS)</li> <li>• Encourage others (RS)</li> </ul>
Benchmark 5B: Demonstrates the ability to identify and take steps to resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resolve conflicts positively (RS)</li> <li>• Cooperate with others to solve a problem (RS)</li> <li>• Stand up for a friend or classmate (RS)</li> <li>• Respect a person's right to have a different opinion (SO)</li> </ul>
Benchmark 5C: Demonstrates the ability to engage in respectful and healthy relationships with individuals of diverse perspectives, cultures, language, history, identity, and ability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get along well with different types of people (RS)</li> <li>• Show appreciation for others (SO)</li> <li>• Make others feel welcome or included (SO)</li> </ul>

<i>Benchmarks</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
Benchmark 6A: Demonstrates a sense of school and community responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make positive contributions to their class, school, or community (<i>SM</i>)</li> <li>• Prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events (<i>RDM</i>)</li> <li>• Help make their class a place where everyone can learn (<i>SO</i>)</li> </ul>
Benchmark 6B: Demonstrates the ability to work with others to set, monitor, adapt, achieve, and evaluate goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to group or team goals (<i>SM</i>)</li> <li>• Compromise for the good of the group (<i>RDM</i>)</li> <li>• Cooperate with others to solve a problem (<i>RS</i>)</li> <li>• Believe working with others leads to greater success (<i>OT</i>)</li> </ul>
Benchmark 6C: Contributes productively to one's school, workplace, and community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make positive contributions to their class, school, or community (<i>SM</i>)</li> <li>• Make others feel welcome or included (<i>SO</i>)</li> <li>• Contribute to creating a positive learning environment (<i>SO</i>)</li> <li>• Believe their contributions to a group or team matter (<i>OT</i>)</li> </ul>



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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](http://www.ApertureEd.com).