

Sample CT Parent Letter:

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

We are thrilled to let you know about an exciting opportunity taking place in your student's school this school year! Over two decades of research has helped us understand the important role social-emotional skills play in each student's success in and outside of school and in life. Skills such as demonstrating self-control, persisting at challenging tasks, making good decisions, and working well in groups are all necessary to being successful students and adults. The process by which students learn these and other similar skills are called **social-emotional learning (SEL)**. To support our students in developing these essential skills to become successful and responsible adults, we will be implementing an SEL screening and assessment process.

As part of this process, our teachers will be utilizing a strength-based tool called the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA), a social-emotional screening and assessment tool. Using this universal screening tool, teachers will assess to what degree each student has demonstrated specific social-emotional skills in the past month.

Sample DESSA questions include:

- How often did the child keep trying when unsuccessful?
- How often did the child offer to help somebody?
- How often did the child get things done in a timely fashion?
- How often did the child work well in groups?

The purpose of the universal social-emotional screening is to identify each student's overall social-emotional competence. It is recommended that those identified as needing further social-emotional skill development be assessed more in-depth to identify which specific social-emotional skills your student has already learned and what specific social-emotional skills need

to be developed. The DESSA assessment targets 8 key social-emotional skills. Once a student's social-emotional growth areas are identified, a plan to target and teach those skills will be developed and shared with parents.

The DESSA is published by Aperture Education. Our district chose the DESSA in part because of Aperture Education's strong commitment to respecting and protecting your student's privacy. Thousands of schools nationwide use the DESSA and trust Aperture Education with protecting their students' data. Aperture Education will never share your child's data with a third party. To view additional information about the DESSA or the privacy policy, visit:
<https://apertureed.com/privacy-policy/>.

While the DESSA screening and assessment is just one component of our social-emotional learning process, we want to make sure that you are informed of our use of this instructional tool. We believe that the information gathered from the social-emotional screening and/or assessment will be beneficial to your student's overall success both inside and outside of school.

We are excited to implement a social-emotional learning screening and assessment process with the DESSA this school year! If you have any questions, please feel free to call _____ at _____.

Sincerely,

School official