

[Suggested Letter from School District to Parents re DESSA-Please edit for your school or organization)

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s), (Personalize with name here)

As you may remember from our note at the beginning of the year, our school has an exciting new initiative this year. Our teachers have started using a strength-based tool called the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA). The purpose of the DESSA is to identify which social-emotional skills your student has already learned and what skills they might still need to develop. We will use the DESSA results to support social-emotional skill development of all our students.

To begin the process, teachers have completed a DESSA-mini screener on all students in their classroom. Below is a description of the DESSA-mini scores and what next steps there will be for your student based on results.

DESSA-mini Scores

Score	Descriptor	Approach to supporting student's SEL skills
60 and above	Strength	Classroom SEL strategies used to support and sustain SEL skills.
41-59	Typical	Classroom SEL strategies used to promote SEL skills.
40 and below	Need for Instruction	Sample - Full DESSA will be completed. A plan will be developed to support student's specific areas of need for instruction with parent input. (Insert your details for creating DESSA plan for student here)

Important ideas to understand reviewing your student's DESSA-mini score:

- The Social-Emotional Total score is a snapshot of a student's overall social-emotional skillset.
- The term **strength** indicates that your student has a well-developed set of social-emotional skills.
- The term **typical** indicates that your student is showing expected social-emotional skills. About 2/3 of children receive a typical rating.
- The term **need for instruction** was thoughtfully chosen to convey that a student needs support and instruction in this area. That is, it reflects that the student has not YET acquired some SEL skills and we, as partners, will work to help your student improve in this area of development.

Child's Name	Gender	Rating Period	Social-Emotional Total	Descriptor
John Smith	M	Universal Screening 2018-19	39	Need

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call _____ at _____ or email me at _____

Sincerely,

School official