

Unlocking Student Strengths with the DESSA System

Goals for Today's Session

By the end of today's session, you will be able to:

- Understand how social and emotional assessments can support students receiving special education services.
- Use students' DESSA data as a guide when writing present level of performance statement(s) and individualized education plan goal(s).
- Choose strategies and resources based on DESSA data to promote skill building.

Opening Activity

What strengths do you recognize
in your students receiving special
education services?



Social Emotional Competence and Special Education



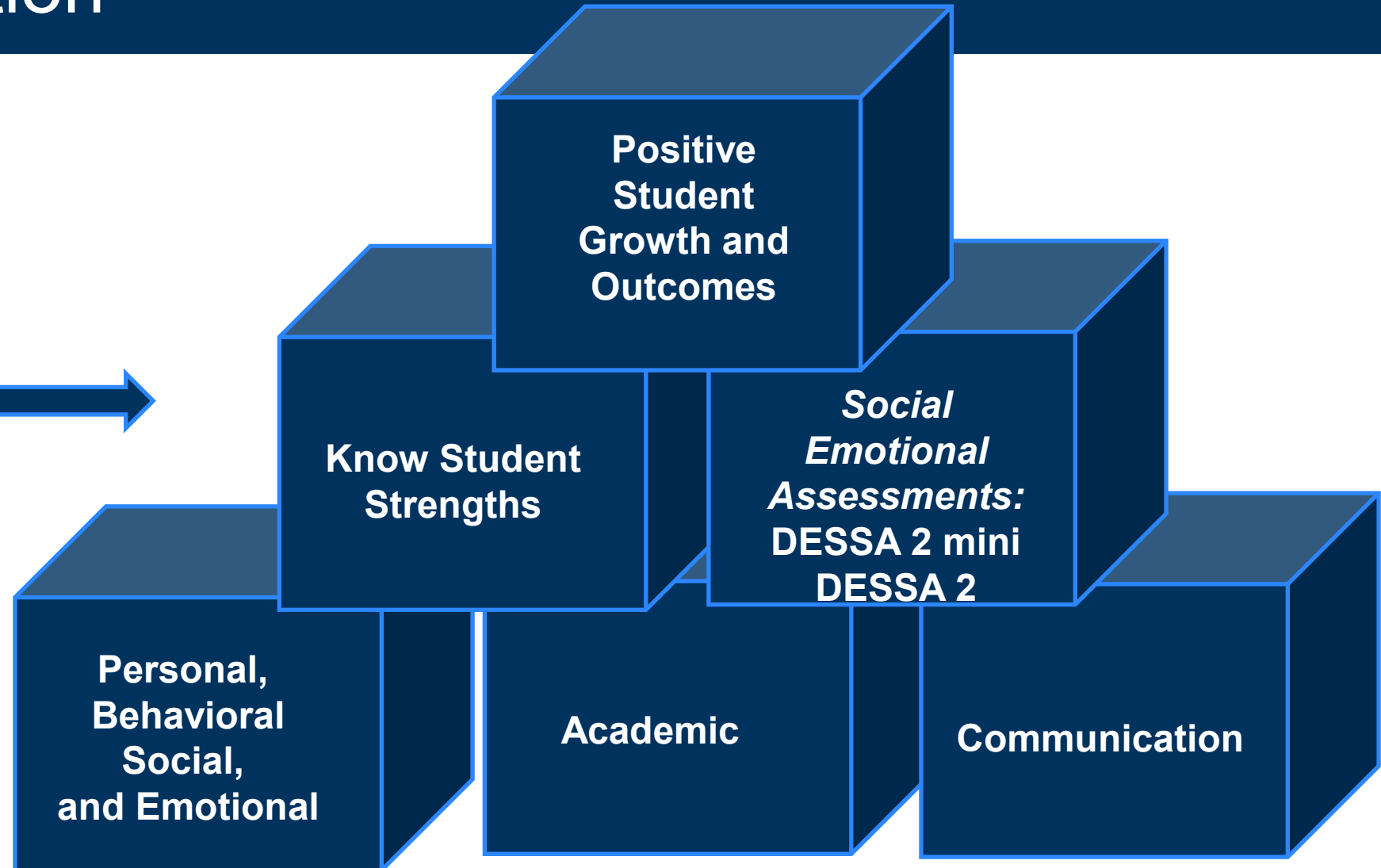


Social Emotional Competence and Special Education

Identify Student Strengths Using Research-based Assessments



Complex Needs



The DESSA

What is it and how can it support
students receiving special education
services?

Jair Abbott

DESSA 2 mini Form A

Student ID: 3459684 [Minimize Instructions](#)

This form describes a number of behaviors seen in some students. Read the statements that follow the phrase: **During the past 4 weeks, how often did the student...** and click on the button underneath the word that tells how often you saw the behavior. Please answer each question carefully. There are no right or wrong answers. If you wish to change your answer, just click on the button for your new choice. Please do not skip any items.

A "Never" response can mean that you have not observed the student engaging in that behavior or that the student does not engage in that behavior.

During the past 4 weeks, how often did the student...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
1. cooperate with others to solve a problem?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. accept responsibility for their actions?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. believe they can achieve their goals?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. work to develop their personal strengths?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. keep trying when unsuccessful?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. show appreciation of others?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. encourage others?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. gather information before making an important decision?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Defining the DESSA

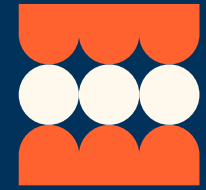
The DESSA is an evidence-based social and emotional competency assessment to support student growth.



Optimistic Thinking



Self-management



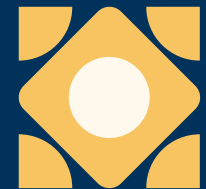
Relationship Skills



Social Awareness



Self-awareness



Responsible
Decision-making



Fast Facts about the DESSA



Standardized



Norm-Referenced



Strength-Based

K-12th
Educators
Complete

DESSA-mini Universal
Screener



DESSA Assessment





DESSA 2 mini (K-8)

**Universal Screener
Educators Complete**

4 Forms



**Score:
Social-Emotional Total (SET)**

Descriptive Ranges

Need

Typical

Strength





DESSA High School Edition (HSE) Mini (9-12)

Universal Screener
Educators Complete

4 Forms



Score:
Social-Emotional Total (SET)

Descriptive Ranges

Need

Typical

Strength





DESSA 2

K-8

**Assessment of 6
competency areas**

Educators Complete

Scores:

**Social and Emotional
Composite (SEC)
6 competency areas**

Quintin Abberley

DESSA 2

Student ID: 307084438 [Expand Instructions](#)

During the past 4 weeks, how often did the student...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
1. show an awareness of their personal strengths?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. accept that making mistakes is part of learning?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. get along well with different types of people?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. stay focused despite a distraction?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. describe the emotion they were feeling?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. view negative outcomes as a learning opportunity?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. ask questions when they did not understand something?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. respect a person's right to have a different perspective?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. demonstrate openness to new situations, experiences, and people?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

DESSA High School Edition (HSE)

9th-12th

Assessment of 8 competency areas

Educators Complete

Scores:
Social and Emotional Composite
(SEC)
8 competency areas

Dominic Abbott

DESSA-HSE

Student ID: 3464032 [Expand Instructions](#)

During the past 4 weeks, how often did the youth...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
1. remember important information?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. keep trying when unsuccessful?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. serve an important role at home or school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. speak about positive things?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. look forward to classes or activities at school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. get along well with different types of people?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. try to do their best?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. take an active role in learning?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. say good things about their classmates?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. show respect for others in a game or competition?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. ask to take on additional work or responsibilities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Think-Pair-Share:

How might a strength-based approach improve conversations about students' IEP goals and performance?

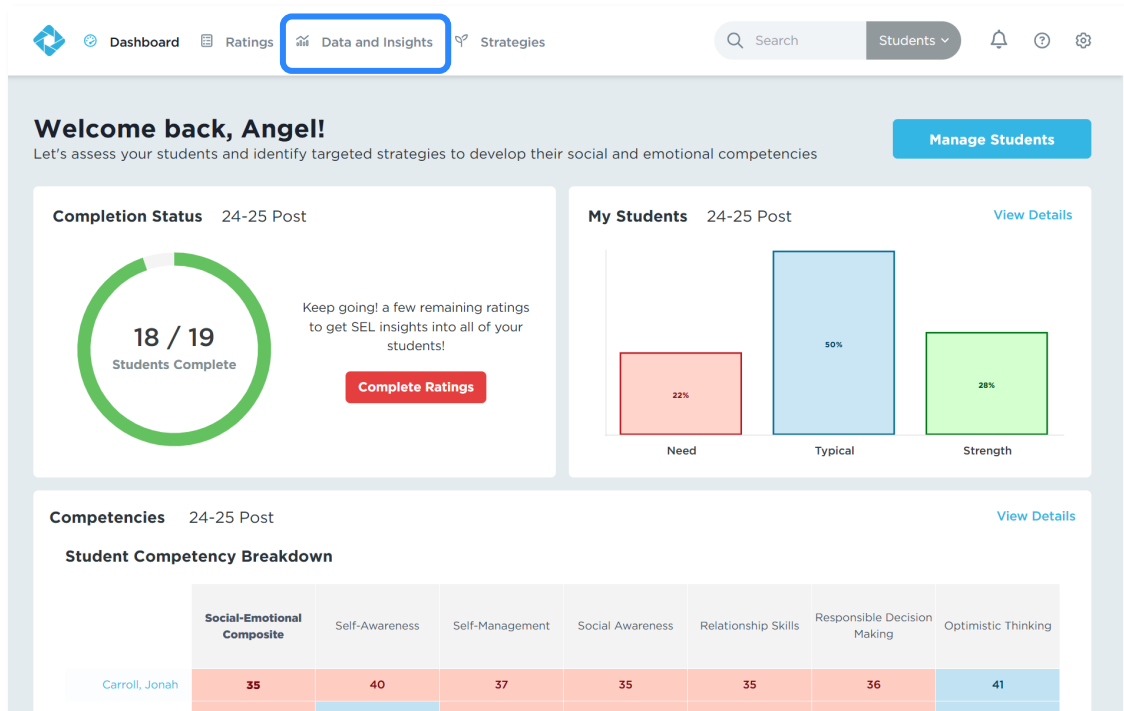


The DESSA and the IEP Process

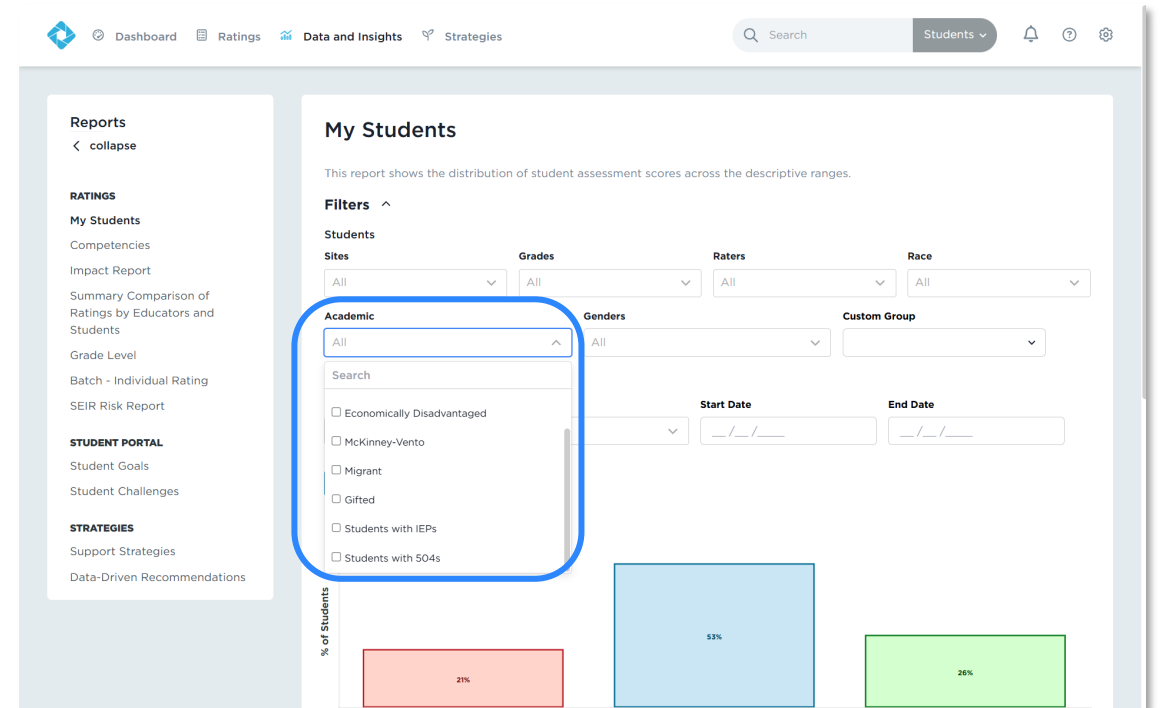




Accessing Student Data



Click the “Data and Insights” tab.



Use the “Academic” filter to view students receiving special education services.



Accessing Student Data

1. Filter for the
DESSA 2 form or
DESSA-HSE form.

2. Click apply.

The screenshot shows the 'My Students' dashboard. The left sidebar contains a 'Reports' section with a 'collapse' button, and a 'RATINGS' section with links to 'My Students', 'Competencies', 'Impact Report', 'Summary Comparison of Ratings by Educators and Students', 'Grade Level', 'Batch - Individual Rating', and 'SEIR Risk Report'. Below this is the 'STUDENT PORTAL' section with 'Student Goals' and 'Student Challenges', and the 'STRATEGIES' section with 'Support Strategies' and 'Data-Driven Recommendations'.

The main content area is titled 'My Students' and includes a description: 'This report shows the distribution of student assessment scores across the descriptive ranges.' Below this are 'Filters' for 'Students', 'Academic', 'Ratings', and 'Forms'. The 'Students' filters include 'Sites', 'Grades', 'Raters', and 'Race', all set to 'All'. The 'Academic' filter is set to 'All'. The 'Ratings' filter is set to '24-25 Post'. The 'Forms' filter is open, showing a search bar and a list of options: 'DESSA-SSE', 'DESSA-SSESE', 'DESSA-SSMSE', 'DESSA-SSMSE SSR', 'DESSA', and 'DESSA 2'. The 'Start Date' and 'End Date' filters are empty.

At the bottom, there is a bar chart showing the distribution of student assessment scores. The y-axis is labeled '% of Students'. The chart has three bars: a red bar at 21%, a blue bar at 53%, and a green bar at 26%.

Form	% of Students
DESSA 2	21%
DESSA	53%
DESSA-SSE	26%



Accessing Student Data

Q Search by student name

[Export CSV](#)

Name ▲	Grade at Rating ▲	Descriptive Range	T-Score ▲	Last Rating Form ▲	Rating Window	Last Rating Date ▲
Adriani, Wang	1st Grade	Need	37	DESSA 2	23-24 Post	05/03/2024
Anten, Sondra	1st Grade	Need	35	DESSA 2	23-24 Post	05/03/2024
Bellows, Vanda	6th Grade	Need	35	DESSA 2	23-24 Post	05/03/2024
Boncoeur, Jerrome	7th Grade	Need	32	DESSA 2	23-24 Post	05/03/2024
Brosetti, Benny	1st Grade	Need	38	DESSA 2	23-24 Post	05/03/2024
Bruff, Mikol	7th Grade	Need	34	DESSA 2	23-24 Post	05/03/2024
Casier, Fonz	1st Grade	Need	36	DESSA 2	23-24 Post	05/03/2024
Chevalier, Nicoli	1st Grade	Need	39	DESSA 2	23-24 Post	05/03/2024
Comfort, Yasmin	3rd Grade	Need	40	DESSA 2	23-24 Post	05/03/2024
Coneley, Netti	4th Grade	Typical	44	DESSA 2	23-24 Post	05/03/2024

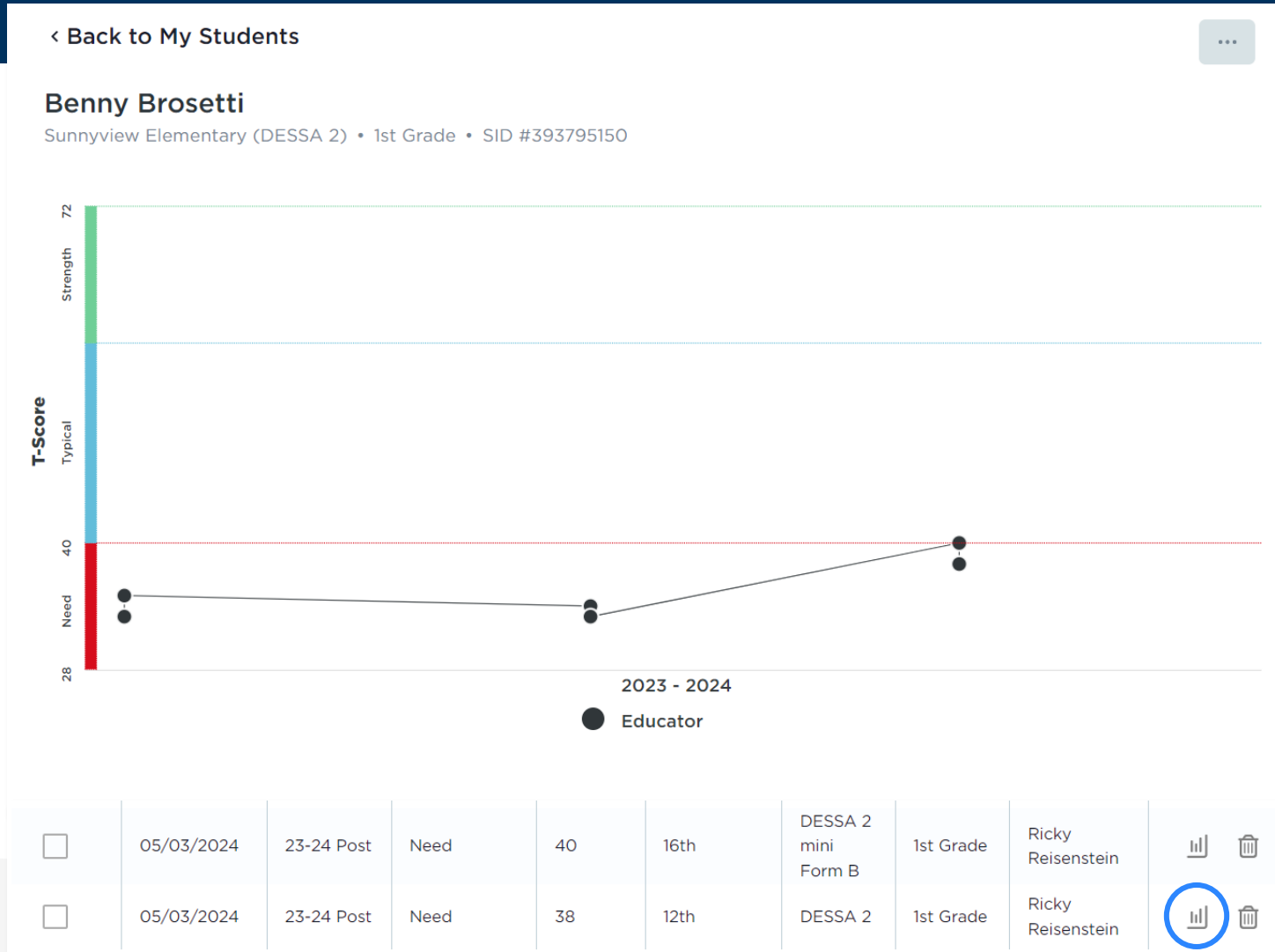
< 1 2 ... 5 >

10 ▼

Click on a student's name to go to their individual student profile.



Accessing Student Data



1. View progress over time.
2. Scroll down to view general information about assessments on which the student previously has been rated.
3. Click on the report icon to review DESSA data from a specific rating.



Individual Student Report

Relative Strengths:

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management
- Optimistic Thinking

Need for Instruction:

- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills
- Responsible Decision Making

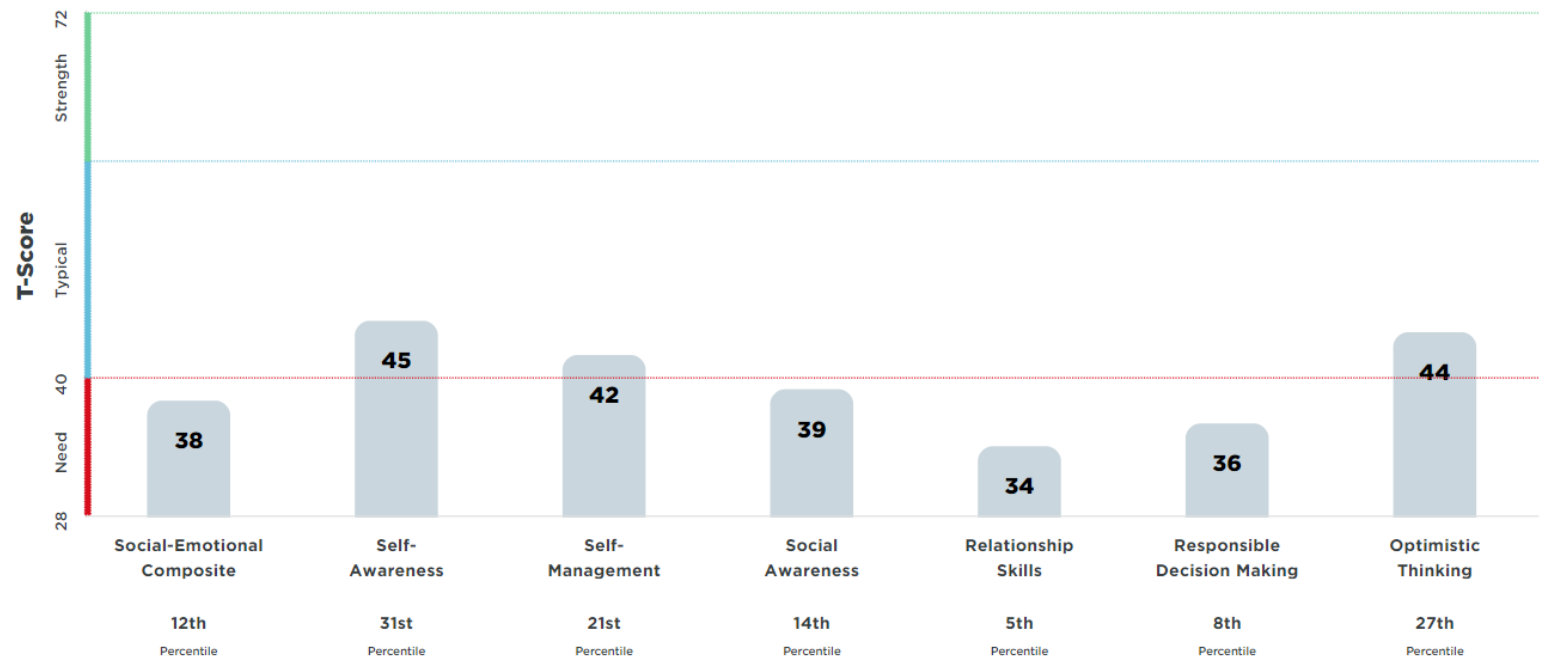
< Back to Student Profile

...

Benny Brosetti

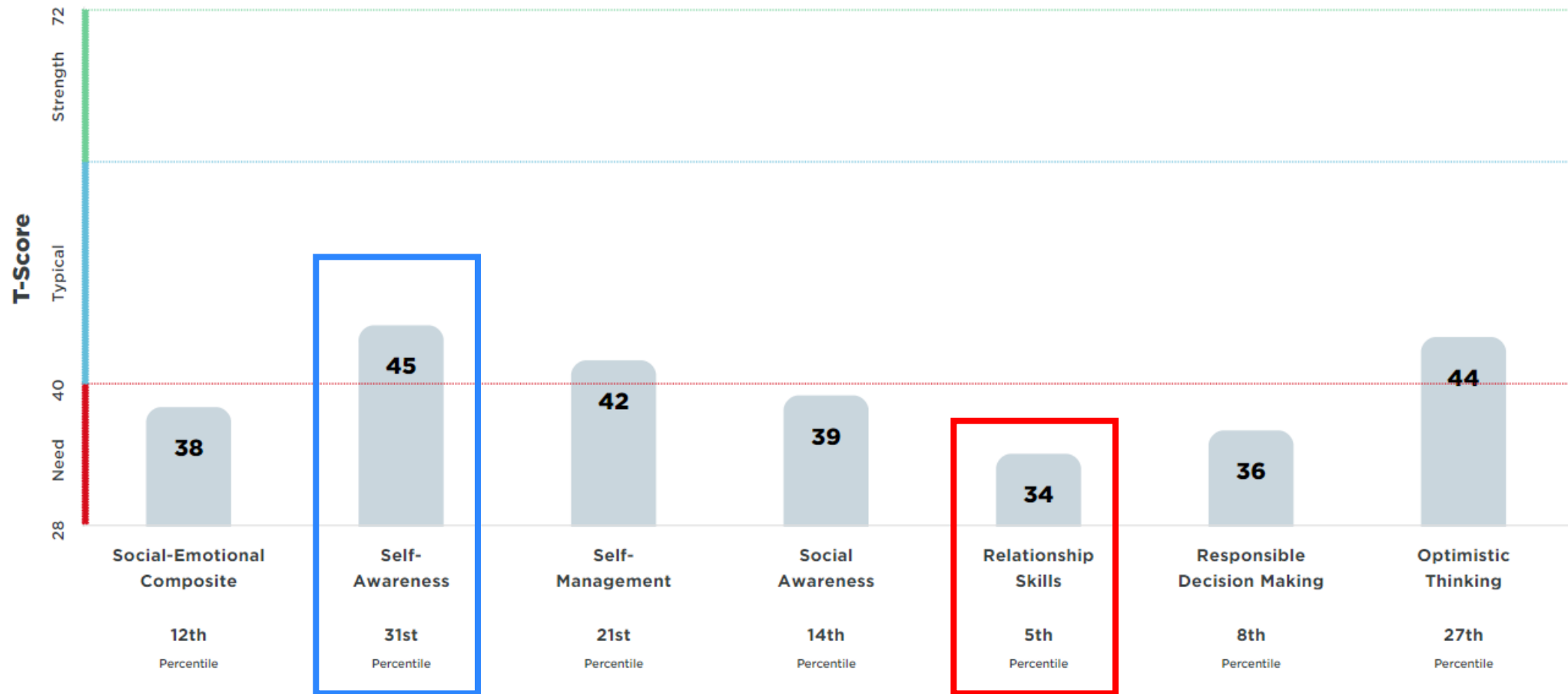
Sunnyview Elementary (DESSA 2) • 1st Grade • SID #393795150

Devereux Student Strengths Assessment, Second Edition completed on **05/03/2024** by **Ricky Reisenstein**





Individual Student Report





Present Level of Performance

Individual Item Analysis

Self-Awareness



Competency	Item	Response	Category
Self-Awareness	show an awareness of their personal strengths?	Often	Typical
Self-Awareness	ask questions when they did not understand something?	Sometimes	Typical
Self-Awareness	demonstrate a sense of who they are and what is important to them?	Sometimes	Typical
Self-Awareness	work to develop their personal strengths?	Sometimes	Typical
Self-Awareness	explain what caused their emotions?	Often	Typical
Self-Awareness	describe the emotion they were feeling?	Rarely	Need

Example: Student A has strong acquisition in Self-Awareness as they often show an awareness of their personal strengths and can often explain what caused their emotions. While Student A is self-aware, they require additional support to describe the emotion they were feeling.



Individualized Goal

Individual Item Analysis		Self-Awareness ▼	
Competency	Item	Response	Category
Self-Awareness	show an awareness of their personal strengths?	Often	Typical
Self-Awareness	ask questions when they did not understand something?	Sometimes	Typical
Self-Awareness	demonstrate a sense of who they are and what is important to them?	Sometimes	Typical
Self-Awareness	work to develop their personal strengths?	Sometimes	Typical
Self-Awareness	explain what caused their emotions?	Often	Typical
Self-Awareness	describe the emotion they were feeling?	Rarely	Need

Example: “By the end of the school year, the student will be able to identify emotions they were feeling, and apply strategies taught to describe those emotions 8 out of 10 observed instances.”



Individualized Goal

Individual Item Analysis		Relationship Skills	
Competency	Item	Response	Category
Relationship Skills	get along well with different types of people?	Sometimes	Typical
Relationship Skills	interact positively with classmates?	Sometimes	Typical
Relationship Skills	encourage others?	Rarely	Need
Relationship Skills	listen to others?	Rarely	Need
Relationship Skills	stand up for a friend or classmate?	Rarely	Need
Relationship Skills	cooperate with others to solve a problem?	Rarely	Need
Relationship Skills	resolve conflicts positively?	Rarely	Need

Example: By the end of the school year, the student will be able to identify conflict triggers and apply strategies taught to resolve disputes in 8 out of 10 observed instances.

Reflect and Connect:

What are some ways that you would support Student A in meeting a goal set for conflict resolution skills?




Data-Driven Skill Building








Data-Driven Skill Building

[Dashboard](#)[Ratings](#)[Data and Insights](#)[Strategies](#)

Students ▾



Universal Strategies

Foundational Practices to create a positive classroom >

DESSA-aligned Instructional Strategies

Optimistic Thinking >	Self-Awareness >
Self-Management >	Social Awareness >
Relationship Skills >	Responsible Decision Making >



Data-Driven Skill Building

Relationship Skills: Apologies and Forgiveness

- Students define what an apology is and learn when it is appropriate to apologize.
- Students also reflect on what forgiveness is and how it impacts relationships.
- At the end of the lesson, students make an apology.

APOLOGIES AND FORGIVENESS

Elementary School

Why this Works

APOLOGIES AND FORGIVENESS

Apologies require an awareness of wrongdoings, acknowledgment of hurt, and empathy! This awareness improves students' understanding and use of apologies and forgiveness to repair damage in relationships.²

 **Duration:** 15–20 minutes.

Activity Overview

It can be difficult to know how or when to make an apology to someone or to accept an apology from others. In this activity, students explore when an apology might be necessary and understand what an apology can sound like. Students also consider what forgiveness means and discuss how forgiveness impacts the relationships we have with others.

Implementation Considerations



Consider implementing this strategy with the Responsible Decision Making strategy, *Caring for Others*.

Italicized text is recommended language to lead the conversation or activity with your students.

Purpose

- Students explore what an apology is and consider when they can apologize.
- Students discuss what forgiveness is and how it impacts relationships.

Materials

- Making an Apology poster (included below)

DESSA Theme

Ability to use effective communication skills, to engage in collaborative problem solving, and to resolve conflicts constructively

Optimistic Closure

How might a strength-based approach
improve:

- Conversations about student support?
- Culture and climate?
- Engagement with families?

