

VERNONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT 47J

www.vernonia.k12.or.us



Dear Parents and Caregivers of Vernonia Students,

We are thrilled to let you know about an exciting opportunity taking place in Vernonia School District this 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 with targeted interventions process.

Multi-tier Systems and Supports include but not limited:

- [Positive Action Elementary Curriculum](#) embedded within instruction at the beginning of each day,
- [Character Strong](#) Lessons within Advisory weekly,
- [Pacific University Psychology PhD Interns](#) conducting group and individual SEL instruction and
- Reengagement [Check & Connect Mentor](#) Program individualized programs for High School students.

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 tool. Using this universal screening tool, teachers will assess to what degree each student has demonstrated specific social-emotional skills in the past month at the beginning, middle and end of the school year.

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.

Aperture Education will never share your child's data with a third party. To view additional information about the [DESSA Privacy Policy](#). To learn more and integrate SEL at home visit the [Family Portal](#)

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 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 Jamie Hamsa, Director of Social Emotional Health and Wellbeing at 971-248-5105.

Sincerely,
Jamie Hamsa

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