



Steven Rioux, Superintendent of Schools
45 Westminster Road, Canterbury, CT 06331
Phone (860) 546-6950 Fax (860) 546-6423
srioux@canterburypublicschools.org

January 27, 2022

Dear Families,

It is time for the winter social/emotional rating for our students in Canterbury using the DESSA screener. As you may remember, we started using the DESSA last year to measure each student's social and emotional functioning to ensure that we are scanning our students for needs that may otherwise be invisible to us. This year, the state of Connecticut adopted the DESSA as the state-wide social/emotional benchmark.

The DESSA (Devereux Student Strengths Assessment) is a strength-based tool that helps teachers identify which social-emotional skills your student has already learned and what skills they need support to develop. Teachers are scheduled to complete a DESSA-mini screener on all students in their classroom for the second time this school year between February 1 and February 19, 2022. The screener is an 8 question rating scale to identify students' strengths and needs. When a student's rating falls within the "Need" category, the teacher completes a 72 question rating scale, which gathers more specific student information. The school's Student Assistance Team will review the results of the DESSA ratings and make recommendations for in-school and/or community-based supports that may be beneficial.

In addition to the social/emotional screener, students will continue to receive social/emotional instruction through weekly Second Step lessons district-wide. These lessons focus on similar social/emotional competencies as measured by the DESSA and often include skill development such as goal oriented behavior, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, personal responsibility, decision making, and optimistic thinking. Providing social/emotional instruction in the school setting has become the standard over the past decade. Canterbury is excited to provide these learning opportunities for our children, and we welcome any questions you may have about the process.

Sincerely,

Cori Beckwith

Director of Pupil Services