



# Overview of Using the DESSA 40: AmeriCorps Members

*The following is a step-by-step overview of using the DESSA 40.*

## 1. Training

During BTA and start of year training, AmeriCorps members will receive training for:

- Introduction to SEL- 50 Acts or Introduction to SEL – Check in, Check out
- Student Progress Monitoring Cycle 101

These sessions introduce our SEL and behavior work overall and lay out how DESSA fits into our work across the WSWC model.

## 2. Observations

To complete the DESSA, AmeriCorps members should have at least 4 weeks of experience with the student(s). This is a technical requirement of the assessment, that users observe behaviors over the previous 4 week period and complete the rating based on those observations. The objective is to get a sense of how students carry themselves in the time and space you share. It's true that you aren't able to be with them all day, every day – so you will miss a lot of behaviors that would inform an assessment of their overall social emotional competence. However, the shared time you do have is enough time to make an assessment, and, the space you share is a place where social and emotional skills support learning.

### ***A note about rating a behavior as “never” being observed***

There may be behaviors listed on the DESSA where the context to allow a student the opportunity to display that behavior has not arisen. For example, one item asks if the student “acts respectfully during a game or competition.” If a game or competition hasn't presented itself, thus not knowing what a student would do, you should still select “never”. The results are a reflection of what you have observed in your time with the student, not a reflection of who they essentially are. How you plan around your observations will be more important than the rating itself – you can find many resources to support lesson planning and goal setting on the [SEL/behavior page on cyconnect](#).

## 3. Selecting focus lists for the SEL indicator area

Once AmeriCorps members administer the DESSA, you can view the ratings in the Aperture system upon submission. All DESSA data from the Aperture system will refresh into cyschoolhouse at the end of each day. This data will be available in Student Progress Monitoring reports through Power BI.

The ratings from the DESSA40 are in the form of the **t-score**. Without getting too technical, the t-score is the only score that we can compare to later administrations. Depending on this score, students are in one of three SEL categories:

60 and above	Strength
41-59	Typical
40 and below	Need for instruction

Based on the above chart and our experience using the DESSA in City Year schools over the past few years we've found students who have a composite score on the DESSA of 31-45 as ideal candidates to be on a SEL focus list. This range is a mix of both the “need for instruction” and “typical” ranges from the provider. City Year has also found that students with a composite score on the DESSA of 46 or greater can be good candidates on a SEL focus list or also as peer leaders in a group setting. If there are students who have a composite score on the DESSA of a 30 or below, AmeriCorps members should meet with Impact Managers should meet to determine the best course of action.

### ***Student Progress Monitoring and reports in Power BI***

AmeriCorps members will complete a DESSA rating for each of student on their SEL focus lists once per month per the Student Progress Monitoring business process. AmeriCorps members will complete at least one DESSA rating for all other students on focus lists (Attendance, ELA, and math) before the end of Q2. All DESSA data from Aperture will be available in the Student Progress Monitoring reports through Power BI.