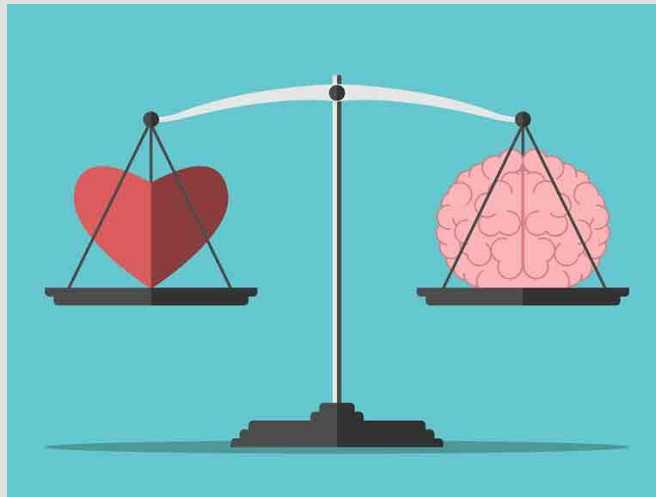


# Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Assessments

---



Heather Wendling, Director of Learning

# BACKGROUND



- All new charter applicants submit a draft accountability plan with their school proposal
- Accountability plans are finalized by the end of the first year of operation
- School operators have the option to include additional accountability measures

# ADDITIONAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES IN ACTION



- Model based on four key values: Sisterhood, Strength, Service, and Scholarship
- Recognized need to remediate skills (academic and non-academic) while accelerating learning
- Significant investment in SEL programming and staffing to support it
- Wanted to quantify students' SEL growth and achievements to demonstrate value and inform supports

# DEVEREUX STUDENT STRENGTHS ASSESSMENT (DESSA) SYSTEM

Four key components:

1. Assessments to universally screen, identify focus areas, monitor progress, and measure outcomes with reliable, actionable data
2. Growth Strategies with research-based, interactive lessons designed for various settings and grade levels
3. Dashboard reporting that provides insight over time
4. Professional Development for teachers and leaders through a variety of training options for programs, districts, and schools

# DEVEREUX STUDENT STRENGTHS ASSESSMENT (DESSA)

- Standardized, norm-referenced behavior rating scale that assesses 8 social and emotional competencies



Self Awareness



Self-Management



Social Awareness



Relationship Skills



Goal-Directed Behavior



Personal Responsibility



Decision Making



Optimistic Thinking

# THE ASSESSMENT

- Full version: 72 test items, can be administered multiple times per year to evaluate growth (typically beginning, middle, and end of year)
- Mini version: 8 test items, can be administered in under a minute
- Can be used to assess individual students, classes, cohorts, or groups, and overall program efficacy
- Utilizes behavior rating scales in each competency area

# THE ASSESSMENT

The DESSA produces a variety of scores, some of which are more useful for external performance reporting than others:

- Total score = Social-Emotional Composite (SEC)
- Competency-specific ratings
- Percentile scores
- Standard scores= T scores

# SEL ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Though SEL programming and subsequent evaluative tools are becoming more widespread across schools, and measure skills critical for college and career readiness, experts caution against reliance on these tools in high stakes decision making.

- Nascent body of study- research and assessment tools are continually evolving
- SEL development is generally not linear
- Prioritize reliability and validity in assessment selection
- Maintain a strengths-based rather than deficits-based perspective



# FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Heather Wendling

Director of Learning, National Association of Charter School  
Authorizers

[heatherw@qualitycharters.org](mailto:heatherw@qualitycharters.org)

Brooklyn Emerging Leaders Academy Charter High School

[www.belahs.org](http://www.belahs.org)

Devereux Center for Resilient Children (DCRC)

<https://centerforresilientchildren.org/>

Aperture Education

<https://apertureed.com/>