



Mercer County School District #404

District Office: 1002 SW 6th Street Aledo, Illinois 61231

Phone: 309/582-2238 Fax: 309/582-7428 www.mercerschools.org

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

We are thrilled to let you know about an exciting program taking place in all of our buildings! Over two decades of research has helped us understand the important roles social and emotional skills play in each child’s success in school, in the community, and, eventually, in higher education and the workplace. Skills such as demonstrating self-control, persisting at challenging tasks, making good decisions, and working well in groups are all necessary to be successful students and adults. The process is called **social and emotional learning** for students to gain these skills. To support our students in developing essential social and emotional skills that will help them become successful and responsible adults, we are implementing the social and emotional learning Second Step curriculum in grades K-8.

As part of this program, our students, teachers, and counselors will be using a tool called the *Devereux Student Strengths Assessment*, or DESSA. This tool asks students and teachers to rate how often a student has demonstrated specific social and emotional skills in the past month.

The purpose of the DESSA is to identify which social and emotional skills our students have already learned and what skills they might still need to develop. Our goal is to ensure that your child is continuously developing the social and emotional skills they need for lifelong success. There is also an option for parents to complete ratings at home for students as needed (i.e. remote student).

We want to make sure that you are informed of our use of this instructional tool. We believe the information gathered from the DESSA will be beneficial to your child’s overall success both inside and outside of the classroom.

The following link can be used to read more and access at-home Family Resources:

[Family Resources Link](#)

We are excited to continue to implement a social and emotional learning program with the DESSA! If you have any questions, please feel free to call your school counselor.

Sincerely,

MCSD Counseling Team

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