

NORTHEAST ACADEMY ARTS MAGNET SCHOOL

TOWN OF GROTON
115 OSLO STREET
MYSTIC, CONNECTICUT 06355
(860) 572-5852
(860) 572-5869 *fax*

RYAN CHANEY
Principal

STEPHANIE WHEELER
Assistant Principal

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

Over two decades of research have helped us understand the important role social-emotional skills play in each student's success in and outside of school. Skills such as demonstrating self-control, persisting at challenging tasks, making good decisions and working well in groups are all necessary for successful students and adults. The process by which students learn these and other similar skills are called social-emotional learning (SEL).

As part of this process, our teachers will be utilizing a strength-based tool called the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA), an online SEL assessment. Using this universal screener, teachers will assess to what degree each student has demonstrated specific SEL skills so far this 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 work well in groups?

The purpose of this universal SEL screener is to identify each student's overall social-emotional competence. It is recommended that those identified as needing further SEL skill development be assessed more in-depth to identify which specific skills the child has already learned and what skills need to be developed. Once a student's growth areas are identified, a plan to target those skills will be developed by school-based data teams.

The DESSA is published by Aperture Education. We've chosen the DESSA in part because of Aperture Education's strong commitment to respecting and protecting your student's privacy. They will never share your child's data with a third party.

While the DESSA assessment is just one component of the SEL 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 this tool will be beneficial to your student's overall success both inside and outside of school. As a result, we are excited to implement this assessment process with DESSA.

This is our second year using the DESSA system at Northeast Academy. Last year was a pilot year and the plan for this year is to conduct three separate ratings – one now, one in the winter and one next spring.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our main office.

Sincerely,



Ryan Chaney
Principal