

Self-Awareness

Self-Awareness: The ability to accurately recognize one’s emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior. This includes accurately assessing one’s strengths and limitations, and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism.

Ideally, educators integrate evidence-based Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) practices across all subject areas to help students develop their social emotional skills or competencies. For the Self Awareness competency, we’ve developed three learning goals, set measurable grade band benchmarks, identified sample activities for each grade band and identified where select Minnesota Academic Standards connect to the benchmarks. The sample activities are suggestions that educators can use to teach the benchmarks – the activities are not meant to be complete lessons. The intent is for students to reach mastery of each benchmark by the end of the grade range; however, teachers may want to revisit the earlier skills periodically.

Learning Goals:

1. Demonstrates an awareness and understanding of own emotions.
2. Demonstrates awareness of personal strengths, challenges, aspirations and cultural, linguistic, and community assets.
3. Demonstrates awareness of personal rights and responsibilities.

Learning Goal 1

Demonstrates an awareness and understanding of own emotions.

Benchmarks, Sample Activities and Related Academic Standards by Grade Band

Grade Band	Benchmark	Sample Activity	Related Academic Standards
Kindergarten–Grade 3	Recognize and label their emotions and feelings.	<p>Routinely talk about physical and emotional cues that tell us how we’re feeling in different situations and in age-appropriate ways. For example, with younger children say, “Some people are happy when they have a smile. Is that what you’re feeling? How can you tell on the inside you’re feeling happy?” Recognize that not all cultures express emotions in similar ways.</p> <p>Listen deeply to what students say and reflect what you heard about their feelings, e.g., “When I hear the kinds of things you’re saying, it sounds like you’re feeling very frustrated right now. Is that what you’re feeling?”</p>	Art, 0.2.1, Create or make in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations.
Kindergarten–Grade 3	Identify positive and negative emotions.	<p>Schoolwide reading of “How Full Is Your Bucket.”</p> <p>Listen deeply to what students say and reflect what you heard about their feelings, e.g., “It sounds like you’re feeling very frustrated right now...,” “It sounds like you’re feeling very happy right now...”</p>	Art, 0.2.1, Create or make in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations.

Grade Band	Benchmark	Sample Activity	Related Academic Standards
Kindergarten–Grade 3	Identify emotions related to different situations or events.	<p>Throughout the day, ask students to stop and identify their emotion, asking why they feel the way they do.</p> <p>As part of discussing stories, have students identify a time when they may have had the same feelings as a character. Ask them to: discuss this in small groups, draw a picture or write simple sentences in their journals to describe how those situations caused them to feel the way they did.</p>	Art, 0.2.1, Create or make in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations.
Grades 4–5	Develop more complex vocabulary to communicate their emotions and feelings.	<p>Students role play situations, which display variations in intensity.</p> <p>Provide vocabulary words such as thrilled, elated, mournful, rejected, disappointed or irate, and have students practice using those words in their writing.</p>	<p>Art, 4.2.1, Create or make in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations.</p> <p>ELA, L4.6, Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.</p>

Grade Band	Benchmark	Sample Activity	Related Academic Standards
Grades 4–5	Distinguish degrees of their own emotional intensity.	<p>Discuss with students the basic emotions, and range of intensity within those emotions.</p> <p>Have students create “emotional thermometers” and discuss vocabulary words that fit at different levels, e.g., irritated versus irate. Refer to the thermometers with the whole class, e.g., before taking a quiz or going on a field trip. Independently check in with them when they seem to need support.</p>	Art, 4.2.1, Create or make in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations.
Grades 4–5	Recognize the connection between their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors.	<p>Read an appropriate book for recognizing emotions and behaviors and discuss how it impacts them.</p> <p>As part of discussing stories, have students identify a time they may have had the same thoughts or feelings as a character and ask them to: discuss this in small groups, draw a picture, or write in their journals to describe how those situations caused them to think and feel the way they did.</p>	

Grade Band	Benchmark	Sample Activity	Related Academic Standards
Grades 4–5	Describe how they physically respond to emotion.	<p>Demonstrate personal awareness through active play, mimicking animal and character behaviors, noticing how their body responds when they act out character emotions.</p> <p>Ask students to work in small groups to describe how different emotions make them feel physically. Or, have them respond to simple journal prompts that ask them to reflect on how emotions make them feel, such as, what does it feel like physically when you're happy, sad, excited, angry or nervous?</p>	<p>Art, 4.2.1, Create or make in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations.</p> <p>Art, 4.3.1, Perform or present in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations.</p>

Grade Band	Benchmark	Sample Activity	Related Academic Standards
Grades 6–8	Recognize the importance of complex emotions, such as an indicator of a situation that needs attention.	<p>During testing and other high-stress periods, lead class discussions about the importance of self-care, such as taking breaks, pacing yourself, breathing deeply and exercising. When students face challenging situations in math classes or with difficult lab experiments, or they appear to be under stress, routinely ask questions that help them identify their feelings, such as, “how are you feeling about this?”; “What do you need to do to handle this situation?”; “What are you doing to take care of yourself?”</p> <p>Have students identify moments where characters in the literature they are reading experience complex emotions. Discuss what these emotions are and why – using evidence from the text and inference – the character might be having the emotions and what they could do to resolve them.</p>	Arts, 6.2.1, Create or make in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations.

Grade Band	Benchmark	Sample Activity	Related Academic Standards
Grades 6–8	Analyze their emotional states that contribute to or detract from their ability to problem-solve.	In pairs or in small groups, ask students to share or reflect and write a response to journal prompts about a time they had a problem, and how emotions such as anxiety, anger or fear may have made it more difficult to solve the problem. Make the point that it’s easier to make a good decision or solve a problem when we’re calm.	
Grades 6–8	Assess emotional reactions in different contexts, such as face-to-face or through electronic communication.	In pairs or small groups, ask students to share or to reflect and write in response to journal prompts about how their emotions may be more or less strong in different situations with other people, e.g., face-to-face interactions, phone conversations, in text messages or other electronic communication.	
Grades 9–12	Distinguish emotions one holds from how others expect them to feel.	In pairs, small groups, or individually, ask students to reflect on journal prompts about how others may expect them to feel in certain situations and how that may be different from how they actually feel.	

Grade Band	Benchmark	Sample Activity	Related Academic Standards
Grades 9–12	Describe how external events or internal thoughts can trigger multiple emotions.	<p>In pairs, small groups, or individually, ask students to reflect on journal prompts about how others may expect them to feel in certain situations and how that may be different from how they actually feel.</p> <p>In response to literature, ask students to think about what the author is thinking about or responding to, and how it appears to be triggering multiple emotions in the author at the same time.</p>	Arts, 9.2.1, Create or make in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations.
Grades 9–12	Describe how changing their interpretation of an event, for example through self-talk, can change how they feel about it.	<p>Share a time as a teacher when self-talk helped change the way you felt about a situation, e.g., “I was frustrated because my friend hadn’t called me when she said she would, but then I reminded myself how busy she was, and that it wasn’t personal, and I calmed down.”</p> <p>When students appear to be experiencing emotions that may interfere with their progress, ask dialoguing questions that help them identify opportunities to use self-talk to calm down, e.g., “I can tell you’re angry about what he did, but what could you say to yourself to help you calm down?” “What could you say to yourself to remind yourself that it’s important to wait until you’re calm to decide what to do?”</p>	

Grade Band	Benchmark	Sample Activity	Related Academic Standards
Grades 9–12	Self-reflect to assess whether the intensity of their emotions “fit” a given situation.	When students appear to be experiencing emotions that may interfere with their progress, ask dialoguing questions that help them identify opportunities to use self-talk to calm down, e.g., “I can tell you’re angry about what he did, but what could you say to yourself to help you calm down?” “What could you say to yourself to remind yourself that it’s important to wait until your calm to decide what to do?”	Arts, 9.3.1, Perform or present in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations.
Grades 9– 12	Understand that identities and heritage practices shape the way one views, understands and interprets emotions.	When discussing characters in literature or historical figures or leaders, ask students (in pair shares, small groups, or in individual responses to journal prompts) to reflect on how the character or figure’s identity/heritage may have shaped their views and how they interpret their emotions. How is this different from the student’s experience?	Arts, 9.2.1, Create or make in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations.

Table 1 – Self-Awareness, Learning Goal 1: benchmarks, sample activities and related academic standards by grade band.

Learning Goal 2

Demonstrates awareness of personal strengths, challenges, aspirations and cultural, linguistic, and community assets.

Benchmarks, Sample Activities and Related Academic Standards by Grade Band

Grade Band	Benchmark	Sample Activity	Related Academic Standards
Kindergarten–Grade 3	Describe their personal qualities, such as likes and dislikes, needs and wants, strengths and challenges.	Students create an “All About Me” poster and post it in the hallway.	Common Core Math Standards, SMP 4, Model with mathematics.
Kindergarten–Grade 3	Describe an activity/task in which they may need help in order to be successful.	In different tasks over time, routinely ask students to think about when they need to ask for help, and who they can ask.	Science, 2.1.1.2.1, Raise questions about the natural world and seek answers by making careful observations, noting what happens when you interact with an object, and sharing the answers with others. Arts, 0.3.1, Perform or present in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations.

Grade Band	Benchmark	Sample Activity	Related Academic Standards
Kindergarten–Grade 3	Identify family, peer, school, community, cultural, and linguistic strengths.	Students complete an art project to celebrate things they love about their family and community.	<p>Science, 3.1.3.2.2, Science and engineering involves many kinds of work and engages men and women of all ages and backgrounds.</p> <p>Social Studies, 2.4.2.4.2, Describe how the culture of a community reflects the history, daily life or beliefs of its people.</p>
Grades 4–5	Describe the personal strengths and assets they possess that make them successful members of their school and community.	<p>Students are presented with a community or school need, and students identify a personal asset that would help address the need.</p> <p>Have students complete a project to identify their own personal interests or strengths, through drawing a picture or writing brief answers on a worksheet to share with a caregiver at home or in peer pair share.</p>	<p>Common Core Math Standards, SMP 1, Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.</p> <p>Common Core Math Standards, SMP 4, Model with mathematics.</p> <p>Common Core Math Standards, SMP 7, Look for and make use of structure.</p>

Grade Band	Benchmark	Sample Activity	Related Academic Standards
Grades 4–5	Identify and explore opportunities to develop skills and talents.	<p>Ask students to identify their own personal strengths and weaknesses that they'd like to work on in an art project or journal activity.</p> <p>Routinely give students the opportunity to reflect on what they like to do and what they're good at. "I can tell you really liked the math/science project we just did. Why do you think you liked this activity especially?"</p> <p>Routinely give students the opportunity to reflect on what they like to read or what kinds of stories or poems they prefer and why. "Why do you think you liked this story especially?" or "Why do you think you like reading these kinds of books?"</p>	<p>Art, 4.2.1, Create or make in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations.</p> <p>Art, 4.3.1, Perform or present in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations.</p>
Grades 4–5	Determine ways to use family, school and community resources to accomplish tasks.	Help students identify a need in the community and develop a project to address the need. As part of the project, ask students to brainstorm and execute ways of using family, school and community resources to complete the project.	Science, 5.1.3.2.1, Describe how science and engineering influence and are influenced by local traditions and beliefs.

Grade Band	Benchmark	Sample Activity	Related Academic Standards
Grades 6–8	Self-reflect to recognize their strengths to meet a need and/or address a challenge.	Routinely provide authentic feedback and ask questions that help students reflect on their own strengths and interests, e.g., “I can tell you’re really enjoying this story. Can you tell me what about this is making you feel so energized, motivated, happy?” or “I can tell you’re really proud of how you did on this project. Can you tell me what about this you’re most proud of?”	Common Core Math Standards, SMP 8, Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning. Arts, 6.3.1, Perform or present in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations.
Grades 6–8	Analyze how their personal qualities and temperaments influence choices and successes.	Administer a school to work survey.	
Grades 6–8	Identify and enhance an individual affinity/interest group, such as an extracurricular group or after school group.	Routinely provide authentic feedback, e.g., “You are really good at X” or “I can tell you really love X.” Encourage students to sign up for school activities that will allow them to develop their interests, such as student council or an after school club. “Where Everybody Belongs” (WEB), is a middle school orientation/transition program that welcomes sixth- or seventh-graders and makes them feel comfortable throughout the first year of their middle school experience.	Arts, 6.3.1, Perform or present in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations.

Grade Band	Benchmark	Sample Activity	Related Academic Standards
Grades 9–12	Evaluate strengths and challenges in relation to achieving goals (personal, academic and social).	Students complete a learning style inventory and discuss ways to leverage it.	<p>Common Core Math Standards, SMP 4, Model with mathematics.</p> <p>Common Core Math Standards, SMP 8, Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.</p> <p>Arts, 9.3.1, Perform or present in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations.</p>
Grades 9–12	Identify things about themselves that they cannot change and devote their energy to something they can change.	As part of social studies or history class, read about historical figures who made a difference in their community. Create a community service project inspired by those individuals, a project that is based on a collective goal of students, and help students identify roles they can fill to support the work.	
Grades 9–12	Analyze how personal qualities help to contribute to community and family, based on identified interests and strengths.	<p>Encourage students to sign up for school activities.</p> <p>Ask students to respond to a journal prompt or essay question that asks them to reflect on how their interests, talents and skills contribute to their family and community.</p>	Arts, 9.3.1, Perform or present in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations.

Grade Band	Benchmark	Sample Activity	Related Academic Standards
Grades 9–12	Examine the ways that one’s actions create unjust imbalances in opportunity, access, participation and success for particular groups of students.	<p>Reflect on roles in activities and the strengths and interests they bring to those teams or groups.</p> <p>Provide journal prompts or have students write an essay in response to a question that asks them to reflect on injustices in their community, and how the actions of different members of the community – including ourselves – may perpetuate those injustices.</p>	

Table 2 – Self-Awareness, Learning Goal 2: benchmarks, sample activities and related academic standards by grade band.

Learning Goal 3

Demonstrates awareness of personal rights and responsibilities.

Benchmarks, Sample Activities and Related Academic Standards by Grade Band

Grade Band	Benchmark	Sample Activity	Related Academic Standards
Kindergarten–Grade 3	Describe what it feels like to feel safe and respected.	<p>Using school or classroom expectations, model and have children demonstrate responsible use and care of their own and others' belongings. Ask them how it feels when everyone respects each other and the classroom.</p> <p>Establish school and classroom expectations using the rights and responsibilities concept, e.g., "I have the responsibility to play safely at recess; I have the right to not be injured while playing at recess."</p> <p>Work with students to create positively stated, simple rules for the classroom. One example is "we listen respectfully when others are speaking."</p>	ELA, SLVML 3.7.d, Recognize safe practices in personal media communications.

Grade Band	Benchmark	Sample Activity	Related Academic Standards
Kindergarten–Grade 3	Explain positive and negative consequences for their choices and actions.	<p>Engage students authentically in decision- and choice-making on policies such as classroom rules, school codes of conduct, and bullying and harassment policies and reporting/investigation protocols.</p> <p>Anytime students face a choice or decision, ask dialoguing questions that help them reflect on the consequences for each of the possible choices. For example, “If we do that next, what will happen?”</p>	<p>ELA, SLVML 3.7.d, Recognize safe practices in personal media communications.</p> <p>Social Studies, 3.2.1.1.1, Identify possible short- and long-term consequences (costs and benefits) of different choices.</p>
Kindergarten–Grade 3	Demonstrate responsibility in taking care of their own belongings.	Using school or classroom expectations, have children demonstrate ways to assert their right to feel respected by adults and classmates.	
Kindergarten–Grade 3	Demonstrate responsibility when using others’ belongings, e.g. asking permission and taking care of the belongings.	Routinely provide authentic feedback and ask students dialoguing questions that encourage them to reflect on how demonstrating responsibility is effective. E.g., “I saw the way you asked if you could use her marker and then returned it when you were done. Do you think she’ll be willing to let you use things once in a while when you need to in the future? Why?”	

Grade Band	Benchmark	Sample Activity	Related Academic Standards
Grades 4–5	Define their role in ensuring safety and respect for others.	Students create posters or drawings about safe and respectful environments, and discuss the roles of students and adults.	Art, 4.3.1, Perform or present in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations.
Grades 4–5	Accepting positive or negative consequences of their own choices and actions.	Use restorative circle processes to assert rights and responsibilities.	<p>Science, 4.3.4.1.1, Describe how the methods people utilize to obtain and use water in their homes and communities can affect water supply and quality.</p> <p>Social Studies, 2.3.4.9.1, Identify causes and consequences of human impact on the environment and ways that the environment influences people.</p>
Grades 4–5	Identify areas of personal responsibility.	Include “responsibility” as a vocabulary word. Lead a discussion about what personal responsibility means. Ask students to reflect on their personal responsibilities in response to journal prompts or in pair shares.	<p>ELA, SLVML 4.7.d, Recognize safe practices in social and personal media communications.</p> <p>ELA, SLVML 5.7.d, Recognize ethical standards and safe practices in social and personal media communications.</p> <p>Science, 5.3.4.1.3, Compare the impact of individual decisions on natural systems.</p>

Grade Band	Benchmark	Sample Activity	Related Academic Standards
Grades 4–5	Explain the benefits of being responsible to self and others.	As part of a reflection – in response to journal prompts or in pair shares – ask students to describe the benefits of being responsible to self and others.	
Grades 6–8	Demonstrate how to assert rights in a way that respects the rights of others.	<p>Students write newspaper articles, journal entries or create art showing personal and community aspects of safe and respectful environments.</p> <p>Students write newspaper articles, journal entries or create art to celebrate ways they or others have asserted their rights in a way that respects the rights of others.</p>	
Grades 6–8	Analyze the short and long-term outcomes of choices and behavior.	<p>Lead a discussion on the difference between short- and long-term consequences. For short term, focus on immediate or today consequences. For long term, focus on the effects a month or year from now or beyond.</p> <p>Anytime students face a decision, ask dialoguing questions that encourage them to think about short- and long-term consequences of their choices. E.g., “What will the outcomes of your decision be, today? “How might it affect you and your goals this semester?”</p>	Science, 7.4.4.1.2, Describe ways that human activities can change the populations and communities in an ecosystem.

Grade Band	Benchmark	Sample Activity	Related Academic Standards
Grades 6–8	Identify areas of control one has over situations in life.	Students design a brochure detailing safety issues and procedures regarding common scenarios and behaviors.	
Grades 6–8	Defines their responsibility for the outcomes of safe, risky or harmful behaviors.	Students design a brochure detailing safety issues and procedures regarding common scenarios and behaviors.	
Grades 9–12	Advocate for the rights of self and others.	Use four-square diagram to discuss different scenarios and analyze community rights and responsibilities versus personal rights and responsibilities and how they relate to each other. Apply this exercise to current events/issues as well as to students' personal goals.	
Grades 9–12	Describe how taking personal responsibility can lead to success.	<p>Give students a chance to role play in situations where students need to demonstrate self-advocacy – with teachers, parents or in higher education institutions.</p> <p>Help students identify an area of need in the community and organize a community service project. Celebrate completion of the project, including how they successfully took care of their areas of responsibility.</p>	Arts, 9.3.1, Perform or present in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations.

Grade Band	Benchmark	Sample Activity	Related Academic Standards
Grades 9–12	Realize the level of control they have over their own lives and act accordingly.	Ask students to write essays about the things they can improve in themselves and in their lives, and identify something they'd like to do. Help them organize self-improvement or community-improvement projects.	Science, 9.4.4.1.2, Describe the social, economic and ecological risks and benefits of changing a natural ecosystem as a result of human activity.

<p>Grades 9–12</p>	<p>Identify role(s) as a responsible community member.</p>	<p>Engage students authentically in decision- and choice-making on policies such as classroom rules, school codes of conduct, and bullying and harassment policies and reporting/investigation protocols.</p>	<p>ELA, SLVML 9.7.c, Demonstrate an understanding of ethics in mass communication and describe the characteristics of ethical and unethical behavior.</p> <p>ELA, SLVML 9.7.d, Recognize ethical standards and safe practices in social and personal media communications, and understand the consequences of personal choices.</p> <p>ELA, SLVML 11.7.d, Recognize ethical standards and safe practices in social and personal media communications, and understand the consequences of personal choices.</p> <p>Science, 9.4.4.1.3, Describe contributions from diverse cultures, including Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities, to the understanding of interactions among humans and living systems.</p> <p>Social Studies, 1.1.1.1.1, Demonstrate ways good citizens participate in the civic life of their community; explain why participation is important.</p>
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Grade Band	Benchmark	Sample Activity	Related Academic Standards
			Social Studies, 4.1.4.6.2, Identify the major roles and responsibilities of elected and appointed leaders in the community, state and nation; name some current leaders who function in these roles and how they are selected.

Table 3 – Self-Awareness, Learning Goal 3: benchmarks, sample activities and related academic standards by grade band.