



P.S. 234
THE SCHOOL OF
PERFORMING ARTS
& TECHNOLOGY

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ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL - Peggy Papatomas
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October 3, 2022

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

Welcome back to the new school year. Your continued partnership with us is more important than ever as we strive to ensure your child excels this school year and beyond. To further support you, our teachers, counselors, and social workers as champions of your child(ren)'s academic and social and emotional needs, we will continue administering the Devereaux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA) that was introduced last school year.

The DESSA is a strengths-based Social Emotional Screener that asks questions about areas of social-emotional functioning including decision making, relationship building, confidence, and others. This tool is completed by someone who knows your child really well—in most cases a teacher. Research has consistently shown that developing the social and emotional skills of students helps them to succeed academically, gain confidence, and be happier. Social-emotional learning, or SEL, includes developing relationship skills, self-awareness, responsible decision-making, and optimistic thinking.

Through use of the DESSA last year, we were able to build on each student's strengths while identifying the social-emotional skills they needed to further develop. When the students' growth areas were identified, we developed a highly responsive plan to target, strengthen, and enhance those skills in the most appropriate manner and settings.

The results of this screener will not be included on report cards, will not have any impact on grades, and will not be used to make any diagnostic or evaluation decisions. The results will be stored securely in an online portal that meets the DOE's strictest privacy and security settings and will only be viewable by your child(ren)'s teachers and select school staff such as the principal or counselor.

We are excited to implement the DESSA beginning October 17, 2022. If you have any questions, please feel free to call Ms. Johnson/Ms. Papadopoulos at (718) 956-2760.

If you do not want a staff member to complete the DESSA screener for your student, you must write a letter stating that. This must be done on an annual basis and the letter needs to be received by the school by October 12, 2022.

If you have any questions regarding social-emotional learning or the DESSA, please call/email Ms. Johnson (cjohnson97@schools.nyc.gov) or Ms. Papadopoulos (opapado@schools.nyc.gov).

Sincerely,

Dora Danner

Principal