

Portrait-Aligned Competency and Rubric Learning Progressions Framework



Nevada **Future of Learning** Network

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Portrait-Aligned Competency and Rubric Learning Progressions

A statewide system for learner growth from early learning through graduation

The Portrait of a Nevada Learner describes the capacities that young people need to succeed in learning, in their communities, and in their futures. The Portrait identifies four domains of whole-learner development: **EMPOWERING**, **CONNECTING**, **IMPACTING**, and **THRIVING**. These domains describe how learners understand themselves, work with others, use reasoning, and navigate change with purpose.

The Portrait-aligned competency and rubric learning progressions in this framework show how learners grow in these domains from Early Learning through graduation. They translate the Portrait vision into clear, observable behaviors that learners demonstrate across grade bands. The competencies describe what learners do. The rubrics describe how these actions become more independent, complex, and purposeful over time.

The framework uses five levels of development that repeat across all four domains:

- **Level 1:** Early Learning, PreK
- **Level 2:** Primary School, Grades K-2
- **Level 3:** Elementary School, Grades 3-5
- **Level 4:** Middle School, Grades 6-8
- **Level 5:** High School, Grades 9-12

Emerging → Developing → Proficient → Extending Competence

Proficient represents the grade-band expectation – “the anchor.” Emerging and Developing move toward the anchor. Extending Competence moves beyond the anchor in ways that allow learners to demonstrate independence, flexibility, and transfer.

Each domain includes one competency per level written in learner-friendly language. Each competency has an aligned rubric that includes indicators, reflection prompts and “how I know I am ready to move on” statements to support student voice, reflection, and ownership.

The framework and the companion implementation guide include Portrait-wide guidance for designing learning experiences that allow learners to demonstrate the competencies. These tools include learning design mirrors, evidence design descriptors, and educator-facing supports that describe the conditions and routines that help learners show their thinking.

Systemwide use of the framework supports coherence across classrooms, schools, and grade levels. Educators use the progressions to design instruction, gather evidence, guide reflection, and calibrate expectations. Learners use them to understand their growth and identify next steps. Families use them to support learning at home. Leaders use them to align improvement planning, professional learning, performance tasks, and portfolios. Community partners use the progressions to understand how learners develop the skills needed to participate in projects, internships, mentorships, and service experiences. The learner-friendly structure supports shared expectations for communication, collaboration, reasoning, and values-aligned action in community settings. By aligning real-world opportunities with the competencies and rubrics, community partners help extend Portrait learning beyond the classroom and support learners as they contribute meaningfully to their communities.

This framework strengthens Nevada’s commitment to helping every learner grow in the four domains of the Portrait. It provides clear expectations, accessible language, and practical tools that support whole-learner development from Early Learning through graduation.

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This guide was developed in collaboration with:



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ORIENTATION

Nevada educators, families, and community partners are committed to supporting whole-learner development across the academic, personal, and interpersonal dimensions of learning. The Portrait of a Nevada Learner describes the statewide vision for the knowledge, habits, and dispositions that learners need to thrive in their learning, in their communities, and in their futures. The Portrait identifies the capacities that all young people should have opportunities to strengthen over time.

The competency and rubric progressions in this framework translate the Portrait vision into clear descriptions of how learners grow from early learning through graduation. They show the observable behaviors that signal growth within each domain and help learners understand how they answer the Portrait guiding questions at different stages.

These progressions support educators as they plan instruction, design learning experiences, gather evidence, guide reflection, and calibrate expectations across classrooms and grade levels. They also support learners as they monitor their own growth and identify next steps. The learner-facing “I” statements throughout the document support student voice, reflection, and ownership.

The competency and rubric progressions were shaped through statewide collaboration and grounded in research on whole-learner development, cognitive complexity, and equitable interpretation of learner behaviors. The language and structure are accessible and inclusive so that a wide range of learners can demonstrate their growth. Nevada’s commitment to the Portrait is a commitment to support every learner as they understand who they are, how they learn, how they contribute, and how they navigate challenge and change.

The Portrait of a Nevada Learner A Coherent, Whole-Learner Framework

The Portrait of a Nevada Learner is a collective vision of the mindsets and skills that bring academic knowledge to life, those that every learner needs to succeed in school, career, and life. It is organized into **four mutually reinforcing domains—EMPOWERING, CONNECTING, IMPACTING, and THRIVING**—each answering a universal question that guides developmental growth from early childhood through graduation.

Together, these domains form a coherent system that supports learners in becoming **self-aware, relational, analytical, and resilient contributors** to their communities.

EMPOWERING How will I grow in my learning?	<p>Reflect on my personal strengths and unique qualities to leverage them in all aspects of my life.</p> <p>Approach learning and life experiences with curiosity and a growth focused attitude to find ways to connect them to my passions and interests.</p> <p>Be self-aware, monitor my needs, and advocate for myself in a variety of environments.</p> <p>Strive for balance by asking for support related to my intellectual growth, physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being.</p>
CONNECTING How do I build and sustain relationships and community?	<p>Build connections by actively listening, sharing ideas, and collaborating toward common goals.</p> <p>Communicate effectively, adapting my communication style to different audiences and situations, while using a variety of tools and technologies.</p> <p>Show empathy and respect toward individuals and groups of diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences exploring multiple viewpoints.</p>
IMPACTING How will I contribute to make an impact?	<p>Transfer and apply knowledge and skills across academic disciplines to make a purposeful impact.</p> <p>Evaluate and analyze data, ideas, and interactions as critical thinkers and creative problem-solvers to overcome challenges in all aspects of my life.</p> <p>Be an engaged member of my community, participating in public discourse and decision-making processes, and promoting opportunities of civic engagement.</p>
THRIVING How will I thrive?	<p>Stay resilient and courageous in the face of challenges and changing contexts, learning from my mistakes and growing as a result.</p> <p>Practice intellectual agility, continuously learning, unlearning, and relearning to adapt to evolving opportunities in my school and community.</p> <p>Be a person of integrity, making and keeping commitments to my peers and community while staying true to my values and beliefs.</p>

Portrait Domains at a Glance



EMPOWERING

Guiding question: How will I grow in my learning?

Students understand themselves as learners and use this awareness to guide their choices, strategies, reflection, and academic self-advocacy. As they progress, they build the readiness, focus, organization, and agency needed to direct their learning with purpose across familiar, varied, and complex contexts.



CONNECTING

Guiding question: How do I build and sustain relationships and community?

Learners engage with others through communication, empathy, collaboration, and community-building. They learn to understand others' feelings and perspectives, express their ideas, work interdependently, and contribute to a sense of belonging and trust in groups.



IMPACTING

Guiding question: How will I contribute to make an impact?

Learners engage with ideas, evidence, and real-world problems to make informed decisions and meaningful contributions. They reason with evidence, analyze problems, evaluate options, and take purposeful action that positively impacts their classroom, school, or community.



THRIVING

Guiding question: How will I thrive?

Learners understand and support their well-being, navigate challenges, and adapt across contexts. They recognize feelings and needs, recover and persist through difficulty, adjust habits and routines, and act with integrity and purpose in complex or changing situations.

About the Competency and Rubric Progressions

The Portrait identifies the outcomes that Nevada values. The competency and rubric progressions describe how learners grow toward those outcomes. The framework organizes learner development into five grade bands: Early Learning, Primary, Elementary, Middle, and High School through graduation.

Within each grade band, learners move from Emerging to Developing to Proficient to Extending Competence. Proficient is the developmental anchor for each band. The other levels describe movement toward or beyond that anchor.

The competencies describe what learners do. The rubrics describe what these actions look and sound like at each level. Together, they support clarity in planning, feedback, learner reflection, and calibration.

Roadmap for the Competency and Rubric Progressions

The subsequent sections of this framework include:

- Domain boundaries, attribute maps, and research foundations
- Portrait-aligned competency and rubric learning progressions
- Details for each Portrait domain: EMPOWERING, CONNECTING, IMPACTING, and THRIVING
- Appendices for families, educators and system leaders

How to Use the Competencies and Rubrics

- **Educators** use the competency and rubric progressions to plan instruction, design learning experiences, collect evidence, guide reflection, and calibrate expectations across classrooms and grade levels.
- **Learners** use “I” statements, reflection prompts, evidence examples, and “how I know I am ready to move on” statements to understand their learning, describe their growth, and set goals.
- **Families** use the learner-friendly language to discuss learning and support progress at home.
- **Community partners** use the competencies and rubrics to understand how learners develop skills that connect to real-world work, service, and civic engagement. The progressions help partners design learning experiences, internships, mentorships, and community-based projects that align with the Portrait. They also support shared expectations for communication, collaboration, reasoning, and responsibility across school and community settings.
- **School and system leaders** use the progressions to support coherence across classrooms and grade levels, guide professional learning, and align advisory programs, performance tasks, portfolios, and whole-learner initiatives.



Portrait Domain Boundary Map

A map of what belongs, domain drift, and the boundary test and rule for each domain.

DOMAIN Guiding Question Core Focus	Must Include	Domain Drift	Boundary Test Question	RULE
<p>EMPOWERING</p> <p><i>How will I grow in my learning?</i></p> <p>Understanding and directing oneself as a learner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness as a learner • Readiness (focus, organization, engagement) • Strategy use for learning tasks • Reflection on learning patterns • Academic self-advocacy and feedback use • Ownership and goal orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional well-being, grounding, recovery → THRIVING • Perspective-taking, communication, belonging → CONNECTING • Evidence, reasoning, evaluating options → IMPACTING 	<p>“Is this about understanding and directing myself as a learner?”</p>	<p>If the action serves the learner’s own readiness, strategy use, or academic growth, it belongs here.</p>
<p>CONNECTING</p> <p><i>How do I build and sustain relationships and community?</i></p> <p>Interacting with others through empathy, communication, collaboration, and belonging</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy and perspective-taking • Communication and expression • Collaboration, teamwork, and group processes • Inclusion, community-building, belonging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning strategies or academic self-regulation → EMPOWERING • Emotional balance or recovery → THRIVING • Evidence use, problem analysis, solution evaluation → IMPACTING 	<p>“Is this about interacting with others, not with ideas or with myself?”</p>	<p>If the emphasis is on people, relationships, or communication, it belongs here.</p>
<p>IMPACTING</p> <p><i>How will I contribute to making an impact?</i></p> <p>Interacting with ideas, evidence, and problems to create meaningful solutions or actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noticing, describing, comparing ideas • Reasoning and evidence use • Evaluating approaches or solutions • Making informed, responsible decisions • Taking action based on analysis • Civic contribution and community impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative communication or belonging → CONNECTING • Emotional grounding, stress response, persistence → THRIVING • Learning strategy selection or readiness → EMPOWERING 	<p>“Is this about understanding problems, evaluating evidence, or taking informed action?”</p>	<p>If the cognitive action centers on reasoning, evidence, analysis, or informed contribution, it belongs here.</p>
<p>THRIVING</p> <p><i>How will I thrive?</i></p> <p>Interacting with change, stress, well-being, values, and long-term growth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional awareness • Well-being and balance • Adaptability and flexibility • Recovery, resilience, persistence • Value-aligned choices and integrity • Purposeful action in complex or changing situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic strategy use → EMPOWERING • Communication or collaboration → CONNECTING • Evidence-informed problem solving → IMPACTING 	<p>“Is this about navigating change, challenge, well-being, or values across life contexts?”</p>	<p>If the action centers on adaptation, well-being, resilience, identity, or values, it belongs here.</p>



EMPOWERING Domain Attributes

How will I grow in my learning?

Attribute	Definition	Core Outcomes	What It Is Not (Boundary Check)
Self-Awareness as a Learner	Recognizing strengths, needs, feelings, and habits, and understanding how they influence learning	Recognizes what helps/hinders learning, identifies readiness cues	Emotional recovery (THRIVING), empathy (CONNECTING)
Self-Management and Strategy Use	Using strategies to stay ready, focused, organized, and engaged	Independently selects strategies for attention, organization, and engagement	Problem-solving (IMPACTING), handling stress (THRIVING)
Reflection and Goal Orientation	Noticing patterns in learning, adjusting approaches, and setting goals	Identifies patterns, reflects on progress, adjusts approach	Values/purpose reflection (THRIVING)
Academic Self-Advocacy and Agency	Communicating needs, seeking support, and directing one's learning	Effective help-seeking, communicating readiness needs, and task planning	Civic advocacy (IMPACTING), emotional boundaries (CONNECTING/THRIVING)



CONNECTING Domain Attributes

How do I build and sustain relationships and community?

Attribute	Definition	Core Outcomes	What It Is Not (Boundary Check)
Empathy and Perspective-Taking	Recognizing others' feelings and experiences and considering multiple viewpoints	Responds with respect, supports positive interactions	Self-awareness (EMPOWERING), values-based ethics (THRIVING)
Communication and Expression	Sharing ideas clearly, listening actively, and adjusting communication for purpose or audience	Communicates clearly and inclusively, adapts message to context	Evidence explanation (IMPACTING), emotion regulation (THRIVING)
Collaboration and Teamwork	Participating in shared tasks, contributing ideas, and supporting group processes	Uses norms, navigates differences, and contributes productively	Solution design (IMPACTING), focus strategies (EMPOWERING)
Community-Building and Belonging	Including others, strengthening supportive relationships, and contributing to environments of trust	Fosters trust, supports a positive climate in person and online	Civic action (IMPACTING), well-being management (THRIVING)



IMPACTING Domain Attributes

How will I contribute to make an impact?

Attribute	Definition	Core Outcomes	What It Is Not (Boundary Check)
Reasoning and Critical Thinking	Comparing, analyzing, and evaluating ideas using evidence and criteria	Uses criteria and evidence, analyzes claims	Perspective-taking (CONNECTING), emotional reflection (THRIVING)
Knowledge Application and Transfer	Applying learning flexibly across contexts to interpret problems and generate understanding	Applies knowledge flexibly, connects ideas to real situations	Learning strategies (EMPOWERING)
Solutions-Oriented Thinking and Decision-Making	Identifying problems, evaluating options, considering consequences, and choosing informed actions	Chooses responsibly, designs/refines solutions	Values-based decisions (THRIVING), emotional choices (THRIVING)
Contribution and Civic Engagement	Participating in inquiry, dialogue, and community action that improves systems and outcomes	Engages in public discourse, acts on real issues	Classroom belonging work (CONNECTING), personal advocacy (EMPOWERING)



Thriving Domain Attributes

How will I thrive?

Attribute	Definition	Core Outcomes	What It Is Not (Boundary Check)
Emotional Awareness, Well-Being, and Balance	Recognizing feelings, needs, and habits; maintaining readiness and well-being	Maintains balance, uses strategies to recover and re-engage	Learning strategies (EMPOWERING), empathy routines (CONNECTING)
Adaptability and Flexibility	Adjusting approaches or mindsets in response to change, uncertainty, or new demands	Adapts routines, shifts approaches, and navigates transitions	Problem-solving steps (IMPACTING)
Resilience, Recovery, and Persistence	Using strategies to recover and re-engage; persisting through difficulty; sustaining effort	Recovers after difficulty, persists with support → independence	Task persistence (EMPOWERING), collaboration (CONNECTING)
Purpose, Integrity and Values-Aligned Choices	Making decisions that reflect values; acting with responsibility, honesty, and purpose	Acts with honesty, aligns choices to purpose, evaluates impact	Ethical reasoning about evidence (IMPACTING), readiness goals (EMPOWERING)

Attribute Family Groupings

A “bird’s-eye” map of attribute relationships

Internal → External

- EMPOWERING = internal self as learner
- CONNECTING = interpersonal/relational
- IMPACTING = intellectual/cognitive
- THRIVING = internal self across life contexts

Strategy versus Solution versus Adaptation

- Strategy (EMPOWERING)
- Communication (CONNECTING)
- Reasoning/solution (IMPACTING)
- Adaptation (THRIVING)

Short-term versus Long-term

- Short-term learning adjustments → EMPOWERING
- Mid-term relational actions → CONNECTING
- Mid-term civic solutions → IMPACTING
- Long-term resilience and purpose → THRIVING

Domain Boundary Test by Attribute

EMPOWERING Attributes → Test Question

Is the learner using INTERNAL AWARENESS or STRATEGIES to guide learning?

CONNECTING Attributes → Test Question

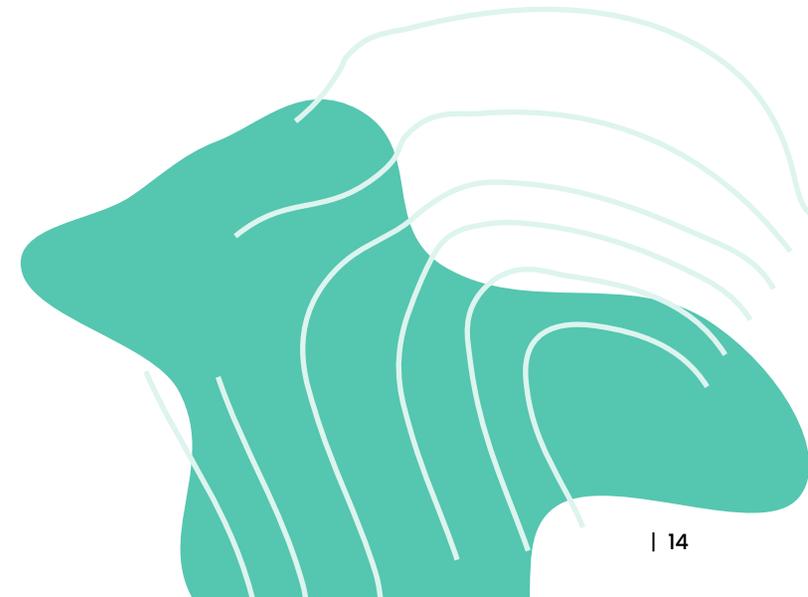
Is the learner interacting with ANOTHER PERSON to build understanding or community?

IMPACTING Attributes → Test Question

Is the learner reasoning with IDEAS or EVIDENCE to make a decision or solution?

THRIVING Attributes → Test Question

Is the learner navigating CHALLENGE, WELL-BEING, or VALUES across life contexts?



Research and Design Foundations

A concise overview of the frameworks, theories, and design principles that underpin the Portrait-aligned competency and rubric progressions. This framework is grounded in a synthesis of research on:

Whole-Learner Development and Social-emotional Learning

Aligned to CASEL's core competencies:

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills
- Responsible Decision-Making

The Portrait domains map directly to these competencies while expanding them through Nevada's learner-centered vision.

Cognitive Rigor

Competencies and rubrics align with the Marzano-Kendall Taxonomy cognitive progression:

- Retrieval
- Comprehension
- Analysis
- Knowledge Utilization
- Metacognition
- Self-System Thinking

This ensures increasing depth, complexity, and independence across grade bands.

Learner Agency and Ownership

Each domain supports the growth of learner ownership through a continuum:

Co-regulated → Co-designed → Self-directed → Self-authored

Competencies and rubrics explicitly embed ownership shifts at each level.

Developmentally Aligned Progressions

The Portrait-aligned Competencies and Rubrics follow predictable developmental sequences across all four domains:

Awareness → Description → Patterns → Adaptation → Purposeful Transfer

This shared architecture provides coherence across domains and grade bands.

Equity and Universal Design

The Portrait-aligned Competencies and Rubrics are designed to be:

- Culturally sustaining
- Inclusive of neurodivergent ways of learning
- Flexible across communication modes
- Protective against bias through domain purity and equity lenses
- Supportive of barrier identification

Domain Boundaries and Clarity

Clear conceptual boundaries between domains prevent overlap and maintain coherent interpretation, feedback and instruction.

PORTRAIT-ALIGNED COMPETENCIES

Developmental Competency Progressions for Nevada's Portrait Domains

What Are Competency Progressions?

Competency progressions describe how learning develops over time. Each Portrait domain includes a PreK-12 continuum of learner-facing competencies that articulate what a student can reasonably be expected to do at each level of development. They make the Portrait visible and actionable by showing how early awareness and participation grow into purposeful, values-aligned, and self-directed action.

Competency progressions:

- Clarify what skill is developing and how it evolves
- Provide a shared developmental roadmap across classrooms and grade bands
- Help educators design learning that is developmentally appropriate and anticipates what comes next
- Empower learners by making growth visible and helping them understand their next steps
- Support coherence across subjects, schools, and systems
- Anchor rubric design, reflection, evidence of learning, and instructional planning

Each progression answers the domain's guiding question from the learner's point of view at each developmental stage.

The competency statements use a consistent structure: "I + action + purpose/context."

This ensures clarity, student ownership, social-emotional learning alignment, and parallelism across domains.

Learner-Facing Overview

Level 1: Early Learning, PreK

Level 2: Primary School, Grades K-2

Level 3: Elementary School, Grades 3-5

Level 4: Middle School, Grades 6-8

Level 5: High School, Grades 9-12

Learner-Facing Overview

Portrait of a Nevada Learner: PreK-12 Competencies Across All Four Domains

	EMPOWERING <i>How will I grow in my learning?</i>	CONNECTING <i>How do I build and sustain relationships and community?</i>	IMPACTING <i>How will I contribute to making an impact?</i>	THRIVING <i>How will I thrive?</i>
LEVEL 1 Early Learning, PreK	I show my feelings, needs, and reactions and try simple, modeled strategies with help as I get ready and stay engaged in my learning.	I notice simple feelings and communication cues and share my ideas with support during play and group routines.	I show what I notice about ideas or problems with help as I explore and learn through simple tasks or play.	I notice my feelings and needs, use simple strategies with help, and try again when something feels hard during activities or play.
LEVEL 2 Primary School, Grades K-2	I describe my strengths, needs, feelings, and habits, and use familiar strategies with reminders as I stay ready, focused, and engaged in my learning.	I describe how classmates feel and what they share, and I choose simple ways to communicate in familiar learning situations.	I describe simple ideas or problems and use familiar examples or observations as I make sense of my learning in familiar situations.	I describe my feelings and needs, use familiar strategies with reminders, and begin adjusting what I do so I can stay steady, balanced, and ready to engage.
LEVEL 3 Elementary School, Grades 3-5	I notice patterns in my strengths, needs, feelings, and habits, and use strategies independently as I stay ready, focused, and organized in my learning.	I compare ideas and viewpoints, notice patterns of effective collaboration, and use communication strategies independently so everyone feels heard, included, and able to participate.	I compare ideas, notice patterns, and use reasons or simple evidence as I explore problems and possibilities in my learning.	I notice patterns in what supports my well-being, use strategies independently and adjust my approach when something feels difficult so I can recover and re-engage.
LEVEL 4 Middle School, Grades 6-8	I reflect on my strengths, needs, feelings, and habits and choose, adapt, and evaluate strategies as I stay focused, organized, and engaged across different learning contexts.	I decide how to communicate with different audiences, adapt my message in person and online, and consider how my communication choices support empathy, collaboration, and belonging across contexts.	I analyze issues, evaluate ideas or solution options using evidence and criteria, and refine solutions as I take informed action with others across different learning contexts.	I evaluate what affects my well-being, adapt my strategies across classes and situations, and navigate challenges or change with growing independence, purpose, and flexibility.
LEVEL 5 High School, Grades 9-12	I evaluate my strengths, needs, feelings, habits, and strategies and adapt with purpose as I direct my learning across new, complex, or changing situations.	I plan communication approaches for diverse audiences and contexts; justify my choices of tools, norms, formats, and styles; and prioritize dialogue that strengthens trust, inclusion, and belonging across communities.	I evaluate evidence, perspectives, and consequences; and design evidence-informed solutions as I take purposeful action to improve ideas, outcomes, or systems in complex or civic community contexts.	I evaluate my habits, choices, and well-being across contexts; align my actions with my values; and navigate challenges with integrity, resilience, and purpose in school, work, and life.

Domain Neutral Educator Supports

Educator supports are summarized here. Domain-specific versions and examples are described in the companion implementation guide.

Educator-facing Learning Design Mirror

Level 1: Learners show noticing in familiar situations.

Level 2: Learners describe simple ideas with reminders.

Level 3: Learners compare, notice patterns and adjust their approach in predictable tasks.

Level 4: Learners analyze and evaluate ideas across varied contexts.

Level 5: Learners evaluate, adapt, and act with intention in complex situations.

Evidence Design Descriptors

Domain-specific versions are in the companion implementation guide.

Level 1: Tasks require noticing simple ideas.

Level 2: Tasks require describing ideas using familiar examples.

Level 3: Tasks require comparing ideas and noticing patterns.

Level 4: Tasks require analyzing issues and evaluating options with evidence or criteria.

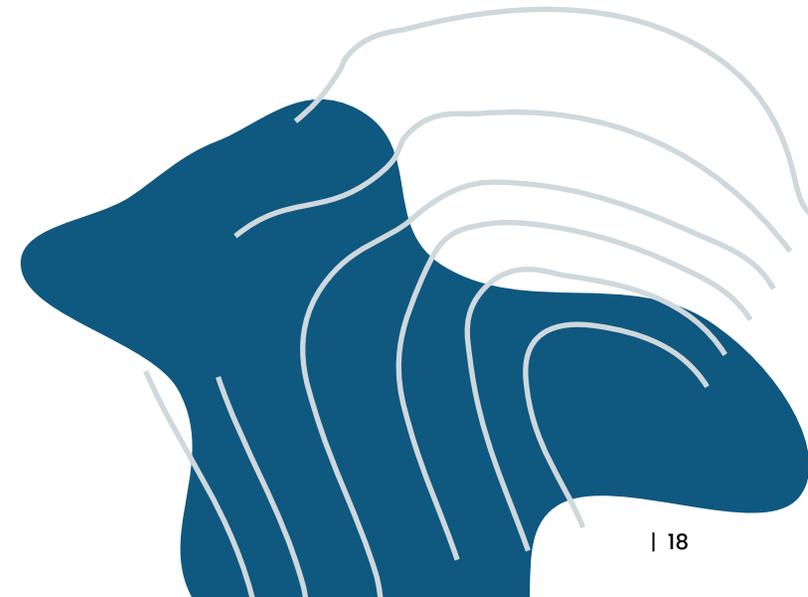
Level 5: Tasks require evaluating evidence and perspectives and taking purposeful action.

Evidence Progression

Domain-specific evidence examples are in the companion implementation guide.

Emerging → Developing → Proficient → Extending.

Evidence becomes more complex and independent as learners grow.



EMPOWERING

How will I grow in my learning?



Learner Point of View

“I understand myself as a learner. I know what I need, what helps me grow, and how I guide my learning with purpose.”

Purpose

The EMPOWERING domain describes how students understand themselves as learners and use that understanding to guide their choices, strategies, and actions in learning. As learners grow, they build self-awareness, use strategies to stay ready, focused, and engaged, reflect on what supports their learning, and advocate for what they need. Over time, they move from showing simple feelings and needs to evaluating their learning habits and directing their learning with intention across familiar, varied, and complex contexts.

Core Actions

Learners in this domain:

- Recognize strengths, needs, feelings, and habits
- Use strategies to support readiness, focus, and organization
- Notice patterns and adjust approaches
- Seek support, use feedback, and advocate for their learning
- Take increasing ownership of their learning

Attributes

- **Self-Awareness as a Learner**
Noticing strengths, needs, feelings, and learning habits, and understanding how they relate to learning.
- **Self-Management Strategy Use**
Choosing and using strategies to stay ready, focused, organized, and engaged in learning.
- **Reflection and Goal Orientation**
Thinking about what supports learning, noticing patterns in habits and strategies, and planning next steps.
- **Academic Self-Advocacy and Agency**
Communicating needs, seeking support or feedback, and directing learning with growing independence.

Social-emotional Learning Alignment

EMPOWERING aligns with CASEL’s Self-Awareness and Self-Management, including:

- Identifying internal states and learning needs
- Setting learning goals and monitoring progress
- Managing focus, organization, and readiness
- Demonstrating initiative and agency

Instructional Stance

Educators support EMPOWERING by:

- Modeling self-awareness and metacognitive thinking
- Teaching and naming strategies explicitly
- Making thinking visible (for example, "Here's why I chose this strategy...")
- Using reflection routines
- Fading supports as learners build independence
- Providing feedback rooted in agency rather than compliance

Across PreK-12

Across PreK-12, students deepen their understanding of themselves as learners and use that self-awareness to guide their choices, strategies, and actions. Over time, they move from showing early feelings and needs to using strategies independently, noticing patterns in what supports their learning, reflecting across situations, and ultimately directing their learning with intention. Learners build readiness, focus, organization, and agency as they navigate familiar, varied, and complex learning contexts.

Competency Progression

The competency statements outline a strategic increase in challenge and self-reliance from PreK through graduation, and define how students navigate the core domain question as they progress through different developmental stages.

Level 1 Early Learning PreK	Level 2 Primary School Grades K-2	Level 3 Elementary School Grades 3-5	Level 4 Middle School Grades 6-8	Level 5 High School Grades 9-12
I show my feelings, needs, and reactions, and try simple, modeled strategies with help as I get ready and stay engaged in my learning.	I describe my strengths, needs, feelings and habits, and use familiar strategies with reminders as I stay ready, focused, and engaged in my learning.	I notice patterns in my strengths, needs, feelings and habits, and use strategies independently as I stay ready, focused, and organized in my learning.	I reflect on my strengths, needs, feelings, and habits, and choose, adapt, and evaluate strategies as I stay focused, organized, and engaged across different learning contexts.	I evaluate my strengths, needs, feelings, habits, and strategies, and adapt with purpose as I direct my learning across new, complex, or changing situations.

Attributes and Attribute Progressions

EMPOWERING attributes are reflected in the competency progression and expanded with more detail here for reference.

EMPOWERING ATTRIBUTES	Level 1 Early Learning PreK	Level 2 Primary School Grades K-2	Level 3 Elementary School Grades 3-5	Level 4 Middle School Grades 6-8	Level 5 High School Grades 9-12
Self-Awareness as a Learner	I show simple feelings, needs, and reactions in familiar routines.	I describe my strengths, needs, feelings, or habits in simple ways with reminders.	I notice patterns in my strengths, needs, feelings, and learning habits across tasks.	I reflect on my strengths, needs, feelings, and habits to guide choices across classes.	I evaluate my strengths, needs, feelings, habits, and learning approaches across contexts.
Self-Management and Strategy Use	I try simple, modeled strategies with help during learning and play.	I choose familiar strategies with reminders and use them in familiar learning activities.	I use familiar strategies independently across subjects and adjust them when needed.	I choose, adapt, and evaluate strategies across classes and tasks.	I plan, adapt, and refine strategies with purpose in new, complex, or changing situations.
Reflection and Goal Orientation	I begin noticing what helps me with guidance after learning or playing.	I describe simple reasons why something helped me in familiar activities.	I explain why certain strategies or habits help me stay organized or ready in my learning.	I reflect on what helps me across classes and adjust my approach with intention.	I evaluate habits and strategies and use reflection to direct my learning with intention.
Academic Self-Advocacy and Agency	I show when I need help or comfort during learning and play.	I ask for help or clarification with reminders when I need support in learning activities.	I communicate what I need to be successful and explain why a strategy helps me.	I advocate for my learning needs across classes and use feedback to improve my approach.	I direct my learning by seeking feedback, advocating for support, and making intentional choices.

Leveled Rubric Learning Progressions

The EMPOWERING Leveled Rubric Learning Progressions translate the PreK-12 competency progression into clear, observable descriptions of how learners develop self-awareness, effective strategy use, reflection, and academic self-advocacy over time. While the competency progression describes the overall developmental arc, the leveled rubrics illustrate what this growth looks like in daily learning experiences—from early, supported strategy use to intentional, self-directed learning across contexts.

Across Levels 1–5, the rubrics highlight increasing rigor, independence, and ownership, grounded in the boundaries of the EMPOWERING domain and aligned with the Portrait’s emphasis on learner ownership. Each level includes learner-facing indicators, reflection prompts, and observable actions that show how students understand themselves as learners, apply strategies purposefully, and take increasing ownership of their learning in familiar, varied, and complex situations.

Interpreting Growth with an Equity Lens

Learners demonstrate growth in EMPOWERING in diverse and developmentally appropriate ways. Some learners may express needs verbally; others may use gestures, tools, actions, routines, or pacing. Patterns in learning may appear through organization, movement, artifacts, or preferred strategies rather than verbal explanation alone. Cultural norms and neurodivergent differences shape how learners communicate needs, regulate attention, and demonstrate independence.

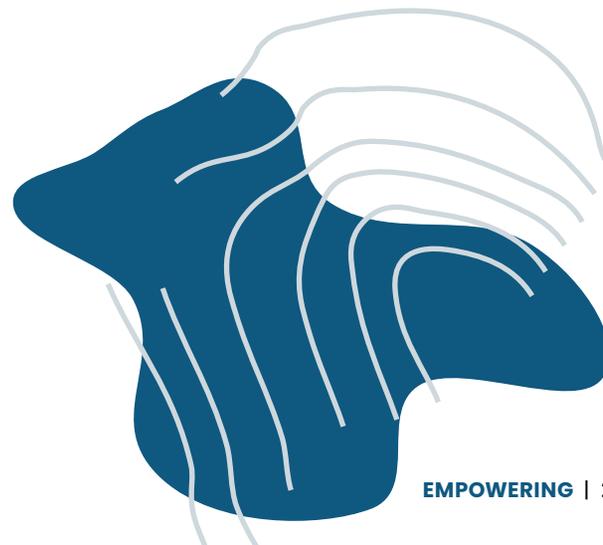
Observable behaviors should be interpreted for their purpose and function, not surface appearance. Co-regulation, shared planning, and supported strategy use are valid developmental steps toward independence, not indicators of deficit.

Inclusive Use of the Rubrics

These rubrics are tools for growth, reflection, and feedback—not compliance checklists. Educators support EMPOWERING by making strategies visible, offering multiple ways for learners to demonstrate readiness and reflection, normalizing help-seeking, and co-designing goals and approaches with learners. Learners may demonstrate behaviors across multiple levels depending on context, task complexity, and available supports.

Readiness for the Next Level

A learner is ready for the next level when Proficient behaviors appear consistently and independently in the contexts described for the grade band, as defined within the EMPOWERING domain. Proficient represents the developmental anchor for each level. Extending reflects enrichment and increased depth within the same grade band and is not a prerequisite for advancement. Each rubric progression is a staircase, not a ceiling.



EMPOWERING LEVEL 1: Early Learning, PreK

Level 1 Focus

In Level 1 (Early Learning), young children begin developing the earliest foundations of self-awareness and agency. At this stage, learners are exploring how to notice their feelings and needs, use simple, modeled strategies, and participate in familiar routines with support. These experiences form the groundwork for the four EMPOWERING attributes – Self-Awareness as a Learner, Self-Management Strategy Use, Reflection and Goal Orientation, and Academic Self-Advocacy and Agency – and will prepare learners for more intentional strategy use over time.

Key Growth Areas in Level 1

- Noticing feelings, needs, and reactions in familiar situations
- Using simple, modeled strategies with adult support
- Beginning to recognize when they need help or comfort
- Participating in predictable routines that support readiness and engagement
- Expressing needs or preferences using early communication methods

Competency and Indicators

EMPOWERING	Emerging	Developing	Proficient (Anchor)	Extending Competence
Level 1 Competency I show my feelings, needs, and reactions, and try simple, modeled strategies with help as I get ready and stay engaged in my learning.	I show simple feelings or needs, try a simple strategy when someone helps me start it, and join learning or play with help.	I name simple feelings or needs, use a simple strategy, and take part in familiar learning or play routines with reminders.	I notice or show my feelings and needs, use simple strategies with help, and take part in familiar routines independently.	I describe what helps me in new or changing routines, choose simple strategies that help me get ready, and take part in learning or play on my own.
Reflection Prompts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What am I feeling right now? • What do I need help with? • Who can help me get ready? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What feeling or need can I name? • What simple strategy did an adult show me? • What helped me join the activity or routine? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What feeling or need did I notice? • What simple strategy helped me during learning or play? • What helped me take part in the routine on my own? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do I notice that helps me in new or changing routines? • What simple strategy can I choose by myself? • How did I get myself ready today?
How I Know I Am Ready to Move On	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I show or name how I feel when someone helps me. • I use a simple strategy when someone reminds me. • I join familiar routines with help. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I name my feelings or needs without help. • I use simple strategies when I am reminded. • I take part in routines with only a few reminders. 	I am ready for Level 2 when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I notice what helps me get ready in familiar routines. • I choose simple strategies with less help. • I take part in routines independently. When I use these Proficient behaviors consistently in familiar learning contexts, I am ready for the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient is the developmental anchor. • Extending is enrichment with increasing depth, a healthy stretch within the same grade band, not a prerequisite for moving to the next level. Each rubric progression is a staircase, not a ceiling.

EMPOWERING LEVEL 2: Primary, Grades K-2

Level 2 Focus

In Level 2 (Primary Grades), learners expand their awareness of their strengths, needs, and preferences, and begin selecting familiar strategies with reminders. They explore how their choices affect readiness, engagement, and persistence. Early self-advocacy emerges as learners practice naming what supports them across routines and learning activities.

Key Growth Areas in Level 2

- Describing strengths, needs, emotions, and preferences
- Selecting familiar strategies with reminders
- Using routines that support focus and engagement
- Communicating when they need help or clarification
- Making early connections between choices and learning success

Competency and Indicators

EMPOWERING	Emerging	Developing	Proficient (Anchor)	Extending Competence
<p>Level 2 Competency I describe my strengths, needs, feelings, and habits, and use familiar strategies with reminders as I stay ready, focused, and engaged in my learning.</p>	I name simple strengths or needs as a learner, use a familiar strategy when someone starts it, and take part in familiar learning activities with help.	I describe simple strengths or needs as a learner, choose familiar strategies when prompted, and adjust small actions in familiar learning activities with reminders.	I describe my strengths and needs as a learner, choose familiar strategies with reminders, and adjust what I do in familiar learning activities.	I describe what helps me in new or changing routines, choose simple strategies that help me get ready, and take part in learning or play on my own.
<p>Reflection Prompts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What am I noticing about what I need? • What familiar strategy did someone start for me? • When did I need help during this activity? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What strength or need can I describe? • Which familiar strategy did I choose when someone reminded me? • What small action did I adjust during this activity? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What strengths or needs did I describe before I started? • Which familiar strategy did I choose with reminders? • How did adjusting my actions help me stay engaged? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do I notice that helps me in new or changing learning activities? • Which familiar strategy do I choose on my own? • How did I adjust what I did to stay engaged in a new situation?
<p>How I Know I Am Ready to Move On</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I name simple strengths or needs with help. • I use familiar strategies when someone starts them. • I take part in familiar activities with help. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I describe simple strengths or needs with reminders. • I choose familiar strategies when someone reminds me. • I adjust small actions in familiar activities with reminders. 	<p>I am ready for Level 3 when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I describe my strengths and needs without help. • I choose and use familiar strategies with reminders. • I adjust what I do in familiar learning activities independently. <p>When I use these Proficient behaviors consistently in familiar learning contexts, I am ready for the next level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient is the developmental anchor. • Extending is enrichment with increasing depth, a healthy stretch within the same grade band, not a prerequisite for moving to the next level. <p>Each rubric progression is a staircase, not a ceiling.</p>

EMPOWERING LEVEL 3: Elementary, Grades 3-5

Level 3 Focus

In Level 3 (Elementary School), learners begin analyzing their habits and reflecting on what supports their learning. They apply strategies more consistently and independently, recognize conditions that help or hinder their engagement, and connect learning to strengths and interests. Early goal setting emerges as part of their growing agency.

Key Growth Areas in Level 3

- Applying strategies independently across tasks
- Identifying patterns that support learning
- Adjusting choices based on reflection
- Linking learning to strengths and interests
- Beginning to set simple, supported goals

Competency and Indicators

EMPOWERING	Emerging	Developing	Proficient (Anchor)	Extending Competence
<p>Level 3 Competency I notice patterns in my strengths, needs, feelings, and habits and use strategies independently to stay ready, focused, and organized in my learning.</p>	I identify simple things that help me learn, use strategies I know when someone prompts me, and explain what I noticed with help.	I notice simple patterns in what helps me learn, choose and use strategies with reminders, and explain basic reasons for my choices.	I notice patterns in my strengths, needs, feelings, and learning habits, use strategies independently across subjects, and explain what helps me stay focused and organized.	I identify patterns that help me learn in new or changing learning situations, choose and adapt strategies on my own, and explain why my choices support my learning across environments.
<p>Reflection Prompts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What helped me learn during this task? • When did someone remind me of a strategy? • What did I notice that worked? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What pattern do I notice about what helps me? • Which strategy did I choose when someone reminded me? • What simple reason explains why that strategy helped? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What patterns do I notice in my strengths or needs? • Which strategies did I use independently across different subjects? • How did these choices help me stay focused or organized? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What patterns do I notice in new or changing learning situations? • Which strategies do I choose and adapt on my own? • How did my choices support my learning across tasks?
<p>How I Know I Am Ready to Move On</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I identify simple things that help me in familiar tasks. • I use strategies when someone reminds me. • I explain what I noticed with help. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I notice simple patterns in familiar subjects. • I choose and use familiar strategies with reminders. • I explain simple reasons why a strategy helped. 	<p>I am ready for Level 4 when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I notice patterns in my strengths, needs, feelings, and learning habits. • I use familiar strategies independently across subjects. • I explain what helps me stay focused and organized. <p>When I use these Proficient behaviors consistently in familiar learning contexts, I am ready for the next level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient is the developmental anchor. • Extending is enrichment with increasing depth, a healthy stretch within the same grade band, not a prerequisite for moving to the next level. <p>Each rubric progression is a staircase, not a ceiling.</p>

EMPOWERING LEVEL 4: Middle School, Grades 6-8

Level 4 Focus

In Level 4 (Middle School), learners plan when and how to use strategies across different settings, analyze the impact of their habits, and adjust approaches with growing independence. They advocate for support, actively participate in feedback cycles, and make intentional choices that foster focus and persistence when engaged in learning.

Key Growth Areas in Level 4

- Planning and adjusting strategies across learning environments
- Analyzing habits, strengths, and challenges
- Using feedback to improve performance
- Advocating for support in a range of contexts
- Making intentional choices tied to goals and well-being

Competency and Indicators

EMPOWERING	Emerging	Developing	Proficient (Anchor)	Extending Competence
<p>Level 4 Competency I reflect on my strengths, needs, feelings, and habits, and choose, adapt, and evaluate strategies as I stay focused, organized, and engaged across different learning contexts.</p>	<p>I identify habits that affect my learning in familiar classes, use strategies someone suggests, and adjust what I do with help when a task becomes challenging.</p>	<p>I describe habits that affect my learning in familiar classes, choose and adjust strategies with reminders, and explain simple reasons for my choices.</p>	<p>I reflect on my learning habits, plan and adjust strategies across classes, and advocate for what I need with growing independence.</p>	<p>I evaluate how my learning habits affect my progress across different contexts, plan and adapt strategies on my own for new or complex tasks, and explain how my choices support my learning.</p>
<p>Reflection Prompts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What habit did I notice during this class or task? • What strategy did someone suggest that helped me? • When did I need help adjusting what I was doing? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What habit affected my learning today? • Which strategy did I choose with reminders? • What simple reason explains why that strategy helped? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What patterns do I notice in my learning habits across classes? • Which strategies did I plan to use today? • How did adjusting my approach help me stay focused or organized? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What habits affect my learning in new or challenging situations? • How did I plan and adapt strategies on my own? • Why did my choices support my learning across different tasks?
<p>How I Know I Am Ready to Move On</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I identify habits that affect my learning with help. • I use strategies someone suggests. • I adjust what I do with help when tasks feel challenging. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I describe habits that affect my learning. • I choose and adjust strategies with reminders. • I explain simple reasons for my choices. 	<p>I am ready for Level 5 when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I reflect on my learning habits across classes. • I plan and adjust strategies across learning contexts. • I advocate for what I need with growing independence. <p>When I use these Proficient behaviors consistently in familiar learning contexts, I am ready for the next level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient is the developmental anchor. • Extending is enrichment with increasing depth, a healthy stretch within the same grade band, not a prerequisite for moving to the next level. <p>Each rubric progression is a staircase, not a ceiling.</p>

EMPOWERING LEVEL 5: High School, Grades 9-12

Level 5 Focus

In Level 5 (High School), learners evaluate their habits, align strategies to goals, and well-being, and self-direct their learning across multiple contexts. They communicate their needs effectively, use feedback to adjust their approaches, and make intentional decisions that support long-term success in school, work, and life.

Key Growth Areas in Level 5

- Evaluating habits and approaches
- Adapting strategies purposefully across contexts
- Using feedback to refine choices
- Aligning learning to goals, interests, and well-being
- Advocating effectively across academic and nonacademic settings

Competency and Indicators

EMPOWERING	Emerging	Developing	Proficient (Anchor)	Extending Competence
<p>Level 5 Competency I evaluate my strengths, needs, feelings, habits, and strategies, and adapt with purpose as I direct my learning across new, complex, or changing situations.</p>	I describe my learning habits in familiar classes, choose strategies someone suggests, and adjust what I do when a task becomes challenging with support.	I analyze how my learning habits influence my progress in familiar contexts, choose and adapt strategies with reminders, and explain why my choices support my learning.	I evaluate my learning habits across contexts, plan and adapt strategies for complex tasks, and direct my learning using intentional choices.	I evaluate how my learning habits shape my approach in new or complex situations, plan and refine strategies on my own, and explain how my decisions align with my learning goals.
<p>Reflection Prompts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What learning habit did I notice in this class? • What strategy did someone suggest that helped me? • When did I need help adjusting what I did? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did my habits or choices affect my learning today? • Which strategy did I choose with reminders? • Why did that strategy help me in this situation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What habits influence my learning across different contexts? • How did I plan and adapt strategies today? • How did my intentional choices direct my learning? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What habits or choices affect me in new or complex situations? • How did I plan and refine strategies on my own? • How did my decisions align with my goals or purpose?
<p>How I Know I Am Ready to Move On</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I describe my learning habits in familiar classes. • I choose strategies that someone suggests. • I adjust what I do with support when tasks become challenging. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I analyze how my habits affect my learning in familiar contexts. • I choose and adapt strategies with reminders. • I explain why my choices support my learning. 	<p>I am ready for postsecondary expectations when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I evaluate my habits, strengths, needs, and strategies across contexts. • I plan and adapt strategies with intention in complex or changing situations. • I direct my learning using intentional, purposeful decisions. <p>When I use these Proficient behaviors consistently in familiar learning contexts, I am ready for the next level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient is the developmental anchor. • Extending is enrichment with increasing depth, a healthy stretch within the same grade band. <p>Each rubric progression is a staircase, not a ceiling.</p>

Bridges Between PreK-Postsecondary Levels

Level 1 → Level 2

By the end of Level 1, learners use simple strategies with support and notice when they need support. They are ready to describe their strengths and needs and select familiar strategies with reminders in Level 2.

Level 2 → Level 3

By the end of Level 2, learners describe strengths and needs and use strategies with fewer reminders. They are ready to notice patterns in what helps them learn and begin using strategies independently in Level 3.

Level 3 → Level 4

By the end of Level 3, learners apply strategies independently across tasks and reflect on what helps. They are ready to plan and adjust strategies across multiple classes and advocate with growing independence in Level 4.

Level 4 → Level 5

By the end of Level 4, learners plan and adjust strategies, analyze habits, and advocate in classrooms. They are ready to evaluate habits, intentionally adapt strategies, use feedback, and direct their learning in Level 5.

Level 5 → Postsecondary

By the end of Level 5, learners evaluate their learning habits and strategies, advocate for their needs, and direct their learning with purpose across contexts. They are ready in postsecondary settings to:

- Monitor their readiness, focus, and organization independently
- Select and adapt strategies across new or unfamiliar learning environments
- Seek feedback and support proactively
- Set goals and adjust learning approaches based on reflection and outcomes

CONNECTING

How do I build and sustain relationships and community?



Learner Point of View

“I connect with others by listening, sharing, collaborating and helping create places where people feel welcomed and connected.”

Purpose

The CONNECTING domain describes how learners understand others’ feelings, ideas and perspectives, and use that understanding to communicate effectively, collaborate with others, and contribute to community. As learners grow, they build empathy, express themselves clearly, participate in group work, adapt their communication, and help create environments where trust and belonging can grow. Over time, they move from noticing simple cues and sharing ideas with support to evaluating diverse viewpoints and facilitating dialogue that strengthens collaboration and community across complex situations.

Core Actions

Learners in this domain:

- Notice and respond to others’ ideas and feelings
- Communicate clearly and listen actively
- Participate and contribute to group tasks
- Include and support others
- Adjust communication to fit the context
- Strengthen trust, belonging, and community

Attributes

- **Empathy and Perspective-Taking**
Noticing and understanding others’ feelings, ideas, and perspectives, and using this understanding to support positive interactions and relationships.
- **Communication and Expression**
Expressing ideas clearly and listening or responding in ways that support understanding and connection across different situations.
- **Collaboration and Teamwork**
Working with others by contributing ideas, sharing responsibilities, and supporting group goals in learning and community contexts.
- **Community-Building and Belonging**
Taking relational actions that help others participate, feel welcomed, and contribute to a sense of inclusion and trust in groups and communities.

Social-emotional Learning Alignment

CONNECTING aligns with CASEL’s **Social Awareness** and **Relationship Skills**, including:

- Recognizing and responding to others’ emotions
- Communicating effectively
- Participating in collaborative learning
- Navigating group dynamics
- Resolving misunderstandings

Instructional Stance

Educators support CONNECTING by:

- Modeling communication routines
- Teaching active listening tools
- Providing structures for collaborative work
- Making perspective-taking visible
- Facilitating inclusive participation
- Supporting learners as they navigate group dynamics
- Providing feedback rooted in agency rather than compliance

Across PreK-12

Across PreK-12, learners develop the capacity to notice, understand, and respond to others in increasingly complex ways. Young learners notice simple feelings and cues and share their ideas with support. Elementary learners respond to others' ideas and feelings and use communication strategies to support group work. Middle school learners interpret perspectives, adapt their message across contexts, and contribute to collaboration and belonging. High school learners evaluate different perspectives and communication approaches, and facilitate dialogue that strengthens trust, belonging, and community across diverse settings.

Competency Progression

The competency statements outline a strategic increase in challenge and self-reliance from PreK through graduation, and define how students navigate the core domain question as they progress through different developmental stages.

Level 1 Early Learning PreK	Level 2 Primary School Grades K-2	Level 3 Elementary School Grades 3-5	Level 4 Middle School Grades 6-8	Level 5 High School Grades 9-12
I notice simple feelings and communication cues and share my ideas with support during play and group routines.	I describe how classmates feel or what they share, and choose simple ways to communicate in familiar learning situations.	I compare ideas and viewpoints, notice patterns of effective collaboration, and use communication strategies independently so everyone feels heard, included, and able to participate.	I decide how to communicate with different audiences, adapt my message in person and online, and consider how my communication choices support empathy, collaboration, and belonging across contexts.	I plan communication approaches for diverse audiences and contexts, justify my choices of tools, norms, formats and styles, and prioritize dialogue that strengthens trust, inclusion, and belonging across communities.

Attributes and Attribute Progressions

CONNECTING attributes are reflected in the competency progression and expanded with more detail here for reference.

CONNECTING ATTRIBUTES	Level 1 Early Learning PreK	Level 2 Primary School Grades K-2	Level 3 Elementary School Grades 3-5	Level 4 Middle School Grades 6-8	Level 5 High School Grades 9-12
Empathy and Perspective-Taking	I notice simple feelings and communication cues in familiar routines.	I describe how classmates feel or what they share in familiar situations.	I notice and respond to others' ideas and feelings in group work.	I interpret others' perspectives through what they share across different contexts.	I evaluate different perspectives and anticipate how others may interpret messages in complex or diverse settings.
Communication and Expression	I share ideas with support using simple words, gestures, or pictures.	I explain my ideas clearly in familiar situations and practice communication routines with reminders.	I use communication strategies independently so everyone can participate.	I adapt my message for different audiences or contexts during collaboration.	I plan communication approaches for diverse audiences and justify my choices of tools, formats, and norms.
Collaboration and Teamwork	I follow listening and turn-taking routines with help during play or group activities.	I use simple collaboration routines with reminders and include classmates when prompted.	I use communication norms and tools to support participation and shared understanding.	I contribute to group processes by adapting communication and supporting cooperation.	I facilitate collaboration by strengthening dialogue, participation, and trust across groups and contexts.
Community Building and Belonging	I include others with help and show simple kindness in familiar routines.	I help classmates feel included with reminders and show empathy in familiar activities.	I use communication norms and empathy to help others feel heard and able to participate.	I monitor how my choices influence belonging and cooperation across contexts.	I take relational actions that strengthen trust, inclusion, and belonging across communities.

Leveled Rubric Learning Progressions

The CONNECTING Leveled Rubric Learning Progressions translate the PreK–12 competency progression into clear, observable descriptions of how learners build empathy, communicate effectively, collaborate with others, and contribute to inclusive communities over time. While the competency progression describes the overall developmental arc, the leveled rubrics illustrate what this growth looks like in daily learning experiences—from early noticing and simple communication to adapting messages, navigating differences, and strengthening community across contexts.

Across Levels 1–5, the rubrics highlight increasing relational awareness, communication sophistication, and collaborative responsibility, grounded in the boundaries of the CONNECTING domain and aligned with the Portrait’s emphasis on learner ownership. Each level includes learner-facing indicators, reflection prompts, and observable actions that show how learners listen, share, collaborate, and support belonging in familiar, varied, and complex situations.

Interpreting Growth with an Equity Lens

Learners demonstrate CONNECTING in diverse and culturally grounded ways. Communication may be verbal, written, visual, gestural, digital, or action-based. Empathy may appear through listening, adjusting roles, offering space, or supporting participation rather than through spoken language alone. Cultural norms, language, identity, and neurodivergence shape how learners express understanding, collaboration, and belonging.

Observable behaviors should be interpreted for their purpose and relational impact, not surface style. Differences in participation patterns or communication modes reflect multiple pathways toward proficiency, not deficits. Shared responsibility, turn-taking, and supported collaboration are valid developmental steps toward independent facilitation and leadership.

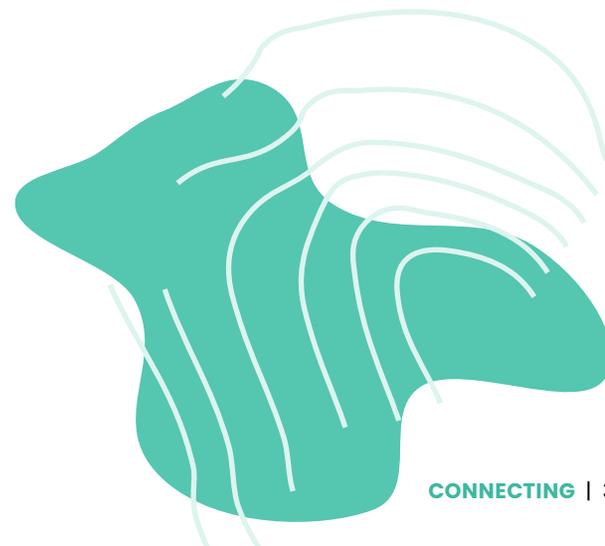
Inclusive Use of the Rubrics

These rubrics are tools for growth, reflection, and feedback—not compliance checklists. Educators support CONNECTING by making communication expectations explicit, providing multiple ways to participate and share ideas, designing tasks that require interdependence, and offering feedback that emphasizes empathy, inclusion, and collaborative impact. Learners may demonstrate behaviors across multiple levels depending on context, task demands, and available supports.

Readiness for the Next Level

A learner is ready for the next level when Proficient behaviors appear consistently and independently in the contexts described for each grade band, as defined within the CONNECTING domain.

Proficient represents the developmental anchor for each level. Extending reflects enrichment and increased depth within the same grade band and is not a prerequisite for advancement. Each rubric progression is a staircase, not a ceiling.



CONNECTING LEVEL 1: Early Learning, PreK

Level 1 Focus

In Level 1 (Early Learning), young children begin developing the earliest foundations of relationship-building and community participation. At this stage, learners are exploring how to notice others' feelings, respond to simple cues, participate with peers, and communicate in simple and meaningful ways. These early experiences lay the foundation for the CONNECTING attributes of Empathy and Perspective-Taking, Communication and Expression, Collaboration and Teamwork, and Community-Building and Belonging.

Key Growth Areas in Level 1

- Recognizing others' feelings and simple communication cues
- Sharing ideas, needs, and emotions through words, pictures, movement, or early tools
- Participating in familiar routines that support listening, turn-taking, and inclusion
- Showing early kindness, empathy, and care for classmates
- Engaging in simple shared play or tasks with support

Competency and Indicators

CONNECTING	Emerging	Developing	Proficient (Anchor)	Extending Competence
Level 1 Competency I notice simple feelings and communication cues and share my ideas with support during play and group routines.	I notice simple feelings or cues, share my ideas with help using gestures or a few words, and join play or group routines with support.	I notice simple feelings or cues in familiar routines, use simple words, pictures or gestures when prompted, and share my ideas during play or group routines with reminders.	I notice simple feelings and communication cues, share my ideas in ways others can understand, and take turns or respond independently during play or group routines.	I notice simple cues or feelings in new or changing routines, share my ideas in different ways on my own, and help others take part in play or group activities.
Reflection Prompts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do I notice about how someone feels? • What cue (smile, frown, gesture) did I see? • Who helped me share my idea? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What feeling or idea did I notice in my classmate? • What cue helped me understand how someone felt? • How did I share my idea so others understood? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What feeling or need did I notice in someone else? • What communication cue helped me understand them? • How did I help someone feel included today? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did I notice that showed someone felt left out? • How did I include someone without reminders? • How did I share my idea so someone else felt understood?
How I Know I Am Ready to Move On	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I notice simple feelings with help. • I recognize simple cues like smiles or frowns. • I share my ideas with support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I notice how classmates feel without reminders. • I recognize communication cues in familiar routines. • I share ideas, so others understand in familiar activities. 	I am ready for Level 2 when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I notice how others feel in familiar routines. • I recognize simple communication cues without help. • I share ideas in ways others understand in familiar situations. When I use these Proficient behaviors consistently in familiar learning contexts, I am ready for the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient is the developmental anchor. • Extending is enrichment with increasing depth, a healthy stretch within the same grade band, not a prerequisite for moving to the next level. Each rubric progression is a staircase, not a ceiling.

CONNECTING LEVEL 2: Primary, Grades K-2

Level 2 Focus

In Level 2 (Primary Grades), learners begin to explain their own ideas, describe the feelings or perspectives of others, and use simple communication norms in person and online. They collaborate with guidance and practice inclusive behaviors that help classmates feel safe and welcome.

Key Growth Areas in Level 2

- Explaining ideas clearly
- Describing others' feelings or viewpoints
- Using simple communication tools and routines
- Practicing turn-taking and respectful listening
- Collaborating with support to include peers

Competency and Indicators

CONNECTING	Emerging	Developing	Proficient (Anchor)	Extending Competence
<p>Level 2 Competency I describe how classmates feel and what they share, and I choose simple ways to communicate in familiar learning situations.</p>	<p>I describe simple ideas or feelings when someone helps me, choose simple ways to share with help, and take part in familiar routines with support.</p>	<p>I describe how classmates feel or what they share in familiar routines, choose simple ways to communicate with reminders, and take turns or respond during group activities with reminders.</p>	<p>I describe how classmates feel or what they share, choose simple ways to communicate independently, and take part in familiar group activities in ways that support others.</p>	<p>I notice how classmates feel or what they need in new or changing routines, choose simple ways to communicate on my own, and help others take part in familiar or new group activities.</p>
<p>Reflection Prompts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What idea did I share? • What did my classmate say or show? • How did someone help me include another classmate? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did I explain my idea so others understood? • What did I retell about someone's idea or feeling? • How did I include someone with a reminder? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What idea did I explain clearly today? • What did a classmate share or feel that I described? • How did I include someone on my own? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What idea or feeling did I retell without reminders? • Which way did I choose to communicate so others understood me? • How did I help someone feel included in a different activity?
<p>How I Know I Am Ready to Move On</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I share simple ideas with help. • I tell what someone shared with support. • I follow communication routines with reminders. • I include classmates when someone prompts me. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I explain ideas so others understand. • I retell what classmates shared or felt in familiar activities. • I choose simple ways to communicate with reminders. • I include classmates with guidance. 	<p>I am ready for Level 3 when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I explain ideas clearly in familiar activities. • I describe what others share or how they feel. • I choose respectful ways to communicate in familiar routines. • I include classmates independently. <p>When I use these Proficient behaviors consistently in familiar learning contexts, I am ready for the next level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient is the developmental anchor. • Extending is enrichment with increasing depth, a healthy stretch within the same grade band, not a prerequisite for moving to the next level. <p>Each rubric progression is a staircase, not a ceiling.</p>

CONNECTING LEVEL 3: Elementary, Grades 3-5

Level 3 Focus

In Level 3 (Elementary), learners analyze viewpoints, compare ideas, and notice patterns that help groups work well together. They use communication norms across modes and begin adjusting how they communicate to ensure participation and inclusion.

Key Growth Areas in Level 3

- Comparing viewpoints and ideas
- Noticing patterns in effective collaboration
- Using communication norms to support inclusion
- Adjusting communication with guidance
- Contributing ideas that help groups work toward shared goals

Competency and Indicators

CONNECTING	Emerging	Developing	Proficient (Anchor)	Extending Competence
<p>Level 3 Competency I compare ideas and viewpoints, notice patterns of effective collaboration, and use communication strategies independently so everyone feels heard, included and able to participate.</p>	<p>I recognize ideas, viewpoints, and communication cues during supported group interactions, and follow basic in-person or digital norms with prompting.</p>	<p>I explain different ideas and viewpoints while collaborating, retell what helps classmates participate, and use communication norms and tools with guidance to support shared understanding.</p>	<p>I compare ideas and viewpoints, notice patterns of effective collaboration, and use communication strategies independently so everyone feels heard, included, and able to participate.</p>	<p>I select and adapt communication approaches to support group collaboration, use communication tools thoughtfully across tasks or settings, and reflect on how my choices influence participation, inclusion, and group success.</p>
<p>Reflection Prompts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What ideas or viewpoints did I notice in my group? • What communication cue helped me understand someone today? • Which group norm did someone remind me to use? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What different ideas or viewpoints did I explain? • What helped classmates participate that I can retell? • What communication tool or norm did I use with guidance? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What ideas or viewpoints did I compare today? • What patterns do I notice in how my group works well together? • How did I use communication strategies so everyone felt heard and included? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What communication approach did I choose or adapt for my group? • How did I use tools or norms across different tasks or settings? • How did my choices influence participation or group success?
<p>How I Know I Am Ready to Move On</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I recognize ideas, viewpoints or cues during group work. • I follow basic communication norms with prompting. • I participate in supported group interactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I explain different ideas or viewpoints with guidance. • I retell what helps classmates participate. • I use communication norms and tools with guidance. 	<p>I am ready for Level 4 when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I compare ideas and viewpoints in group work. • I notice patterns of effective collaboration. • I use communication modes and norms independently, so everyone feels heard and prepared to participate. <p>When I use these Proficient behaviors consistently in familiar learning contexts, I am ready for the next level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient is the developmental anchor. • Extending is enrichment with increasing depth, a healthy stretch within the same grade band, not a prerequisite for moving to the next level. <p>Each rubric progression is a staircase, not a ceiling.</p>

CONNECTING LEVEL 4: Middle School, Grades 6-8

Level 4 Focus

In Level 4 (Middle School), learners decide how to communicate for different audiences and contexts, adapt messages in real time, and consider the relational impact of their communication choices. They navigate differences with empathy and make choices that support belonging and effective group work.

Key Growth Areas in Level 4

- Deciding how to communicate with the audience and purpose
- Adapting communication in person and online
- Considering how choices affect relationships and group dynamics
- Navigating differences with empathy
- Supporting equitable participation and collaboration

Competency and Indicators

CONNECTING	Emerging	Developing	Proficient (Anchor)	Extending Competence
<p>Level 4 Competency I decide how to communicate with different audiences, adapt my message in person and online, and consider how my communication choices support empathy, collaboration, and belonging across contexts.</p>	<p>I describe communication expectations in familiar situations, explain simple differences in how messages may be understood, and follow modeled strategies for listening, sharing, and showing empathy during in-person or online interactions.</p>	<p>I examine communication needs in group tasks, compare options for wording or tone with guidance, and use communication norms to support empathy, understanding, and cooperation.</p>	<p>I apply communication strategies intentionally based on audience and situation, adapt messages across in-person and digital settings, and monitor how my choices support empathy, collaboration, belonging, and constructive conflict navigation.</p>	<p>I evaluate communication approaches across varied settings, anticipate how peers may interpret messages, and adjust strategies independently to strengthen empathy, inclusion, collaboration, and healthy conflict resolution.</p>
<p>Reflection Prompts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What communication expectation did I notice today? • How might someone understand a message differently? • Which listening or sharing strategy did I follow with help? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What communication need did I notice in my group? • Which wording or tone choice did I compare? • How did communication norms help us cooperate? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did I decide how to communicate for my audience? • How did I adapt my message online or in person? • How did my choices support empathy, collaboration, or belonging? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did I evaluate about my communication approach today? • How did I anticipate how someone might interpret my message? • How did my adjustments support inclusion or resolve conflict?
<p>How I Know I Am Ready to Move On</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I describe communication expectations in familiar situations. • I explain simple differences in how messages may be understood. • I follow modeled strategies for listening, sharing, and empathy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I examine communication needs in group tasks. • I compare wording or tone choices with guidance. • I use communication norms to support cooperation. 	<p>I am ready for Level 5 when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I intentionally apply communication strategies for different audiences. • I adapt messages across in-person and digital settings. • I monitor how my choices support empathy, collaboration, and belonging. <p>When I use these Proficient behaviors consistently in familiar learning contexts, I am ready for the next level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient is the developmental anchor. • Extending is enrichment with increasing depth, a healthy stretch within the same grade band, not a prerequisite for moving to the next level. <p>Each rubric progression is a staircase, not a ceiling.</p>

CONNECTING LEVEL 5: High School, Grades 9-12

Level 5 Focus

In Level 5 (High School), learners decide how to communicate for different audiences and contexts, adapt messages in real time, and consider the relational impact of their communication choices. They navigate differences with empathy and make choices that support belonging and effective group work.

Key Growth Areas in Level 5

- Deciding how to communicate with the audience and purpose
- Adapting communication in person and online
- Considering how choices affect relationships and group dynamics
- Navigating differences with empathy
- Supporting equitable participation and collaboration

Competency and Indicators

CONNECTING	Emerging	Developing	Proficient (Anchor)	Extending Competence
<p>Level 5 Competency I plan communication approaches for diverse audiences and contexts, justify my choices of tools, norms, formats, and styles, and prioritize dialogue that strengthens trust, inclusion, and belonging across communities.</p>	<p>I analyze communication needs by comparing audiences, perspectives, and contexts, select familiar tools or formats with guidance, and use communication norms to support inclusive and meaningful interaction.</p>	<p>I apply communication strategies purposefully, adapt tools and formats with guidance, and use communication norms to support empathy, understanding, and constructive dialogue.</p>	<p>I evaluate communication approaches for purpose, audience, culture, and context, select and justify tools, formats, and norms for in-person and digital communication, and use these choices to build trust, inclusion, and meaningful dialogue across communities.</p>	<p>I prioritize communication approaches independently across varied community and digital settings, anticipate complex audience needs, revise strategies based on relational impact, and model communication that strengthens trust, belonging, and inclusive dialogue.</p>
<p>Reflection Prompts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What communication needs did I notice for different audiences? • Which tool or format did I choose with guidance? • How did I support meaningful interaction? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did I apply a communication strategy with purpose? • Which tools or formats did I adapt? • How did my choices support understanding or dialogue? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What communication approach did I evaluate today? • How did I justify my choices of tools or formats? • How did my choices strengthen trust, inclusion, or belonging? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did I choose approaches independently for different settings? • How did I anticipate what an audience needed? • How did I revise my strategy to support inclusive dialogue?
<p>How I Know I Am Ready to Move On</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I analyze communication needs in familiar contexts. • I choose tools or formats with guidance. • I use norms that support inclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I apply strategies purposefully. • I adapt tools or formats with reminders. • I support empathy and constructive dialogue. 	<p>I am ready for postsecondary expectations when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I evaluate communication approaches for purpose, audience, culture, and context. • I justify my choices of tools, formats, and norms. • I use these choices to build trust, inclusion, and meaningful dialogue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient is the developmental anchor. • Extending is enrichment with increasing depth, a healthy stretch within the same grade band. <p>Each rubric progression is a staircase, not a ceiling.</p>

Bridges Between PreK-Postsecondary Levels

Level 1 → Level 2

By the end of Level 1, learners notice simple feelings and communication cues and share their ideas with support during play and group routines. They begin to follow listening and turn-taking structures with help and show early kindness and inclusion when prompted. These experiences prepare them for Level 2, where they describe how classmates feel or what they share and begin choosing simple ways to communicate in familiar learning situations.

Level 2 → Level 3

By the end of Level 2, learners describe how classmates feel or what they share, choose simple ways to communicate, and take part in familiar group activities in ways that support others. They are learning to explain ideas clearly, retell peers' ideas or feelings, and include classmates more independently. These skills prepare them for Level 3, where they compare ideas and viewpoints, notice patterns of effective collaboration, and use communication strategies independently so everyone feels heard, included, and able to participate.

Level 3 → Level 4

By the end of Level 3, learners compare ideas and viewpoints, notice patterns in how groups work well together, and use communication norms and strategies independently to support participation. They have experience using different communication tools, supporting classmates' participation and reflecting on what helps collaboration. This foundation prepares them for Level 4, where they decide how to communicate with different audiences, adapt messages in person and online, and consider how their choices support empathy, collaboration, and belonging across contexts.

Level 4 → Level 5

By the end of Level 4, learners interpret others' perspectives and communication needs, adapt their message across in-person and digital settings, and monitor how their choices influence belonging and cooperation. They are developing the ability to navigate differences with empathy and to adjust communication strategies based on context. These capabilities prepare them for Level 5, where they plan communication approaches for diverse audiences and contexts, justify choices of tools, formats and norms, and prioritize dialogue that strengthens trust, inclusion, and belonging across communities.

Level 5 → Postsecondary

By the end of Level 5, learners intentionally plan and justify communication approaches, engage in dialogue across differences, and contribute to inclusive, trust-building communities. They are ready in postsecondary settings to:

- Adapt communication for diverse audiences, purposes, and settings
- Justify communication choices using clear reasoning and shared norms
- Facilitate dialogue that strengthens inclusion, trust, and collaboration
- Participate productively in academic, professional, civic, and digital communities

IMPACTING

How will I contribute to make an impact?



Learner Point of View

"I explore ideas, ask questions, use evidence to make sense of things, and take informed action that contributes to my learning, my work, and my community."

Purpose

The IMPACTING domain describes how learners engage with ideas, evidence, and real-world problems to make informed decisions and meaningful contributions. As learners grow, they observe and represent ideas, compare options, analyze information, evaluate evidence, and refine solutions. They use what they learn to take responsible, purposeful action that contributes to their classroom, school, or community. Over time, they move from noticing simple ideas to evaluating complex information and acting with intention in new, varied, and civic contexts.

Core Actions

Learners in this domain:

- Notice and describe ideas or problems
- Use examples, observations, and evidence
- Compare and analyze ideas
- Generate and refine solutions
- Evaluate consequences
- Take responsible and purposeful action
- Contribute to positive change in the classroom, school, or community life

Attributes

- **Reasoning and Critical Thinking**
Comparing, analyzing, and evaluating ideas using evidence, criteria, or observations.
- **Knowledge Application and Transfer**
Applying learning flexibly across tasks and contexts to interpret problems, make sense of information, and generate new understanding.
- **Solutions-Oriented Thinking and Decision-Making**
Identifying problems, generating ideas, evaluating options, and choosing responsible, evidence-informed actions.
- **Contribution and Civic Engagement**
Participating in inquiry, dialogue, or action that improves classroom, school, or community life, and contributing thoughtfully to issues that matter.

Social-emotional Learning Alignment

IMPACTING aligns with CASEL's **Responsible Decision-Making**, including:

- Analyzing situations
- Evaluating evidence and consequences
- Making ethical, informed decisions
- Considering community well-being
- Taking purposeful action

Instructional Stance

Educators support IMPACTING by:

- Modeling inquiry and reasoning
- Providing opportunities to analyze evidence
- Designing tasks requiring evaluation and choice-making
- Guiding solution refinement and revision
- Creating spaces for informed action and reflection

Across PreK-12

Across PreK–12, learners develop the ability to engage thoughtfully with ideas, use evidence to make sense of problems, compare and evaluate options, and take informed action that contributes to their community. Young learners notice simple ideas and explore issues with support. Elementary learners compare ideas, notice patterns, and use simple evidence to explore possibilities. Middle school learners analyze issues, evaluate ideas using evidence and criteria, and refine solutions as they take informed action with others. High school learners evaluate complex evidence and perspectives, design evidence-informed solutions, and take purposeful action in civic or community contexts.

Competency Progression

The competency statements outline a strategic increase in challenge and self-reliance from PreK through graduation, and define how students navigate the core domain question as they progress through different developmental stages.

Level 1 Early Learning PreK	Level 2 Primary School Grades K-2	Level 3 Elementary School Grades 3-5	Level 4 Middle School Grades 6-8	Level 5 High School Grades 9-12
I show what I notice about ideas or problems with help as I explore and learn through simple tasks or play.	I describe simple ideas or problems and use familiar examples or observations as I make sense of my learning in familiar situations.	I compare ideas, notice patterns, and use reasons or simple evidence as I explore problems and possibilities in my learning.	I analyze issues, evaluate ideas or solution options using evidence and criteria, and refine solutions as I take informed action with others across different learning contexts.	I evaluate evidence, perspectives, and consequences, and design evidence-informed solutions as I take purposeful action to improve ideas, outcomes, or systems in complex or civic community contexts.

Attributes and Attribute Progressions

IMPACTING attributes are reflected in the competency progression and expanded with more detail here for reference.

IMPACTING ATTRIBUTES	Level 1 Early Learning PreK	Level 2 Primary School Grades K-2	Level 3 Elementary School Grades 3-5	Level 4 Middle School Grades 6-8	Level 5 High School Grades 9-12
Reasoning and Critical Thinking	I show simple ideas or changes I notice during play or tasks and respond when something shifts or changes.	I describe simple ideas or problems and use familiar examples or observations to explain what I noticed.	I compare ideas, notice patterns in familiar situations, and use reasons or simple evidence to make sense of problems and possibilities.	I analyze issues by organizing information, comparing ideas or solution options using evidence and criteria, and explaining my reasoning during group decisions.	I evaluate evidence, perspectives, and consequences to understand complex issues and justify my decisions using credible evidence and clear criteria.
Knowledge Application and Transfer	I explore materials or ideas and show what happens during simple tasks or play.	I use familiar examples, observations or early ideas to make sense of tasks in familiar situations.	I apply what I know to explore problems, compare solutions, and suggest possibilities for what to try next.	I apply learning across subjects to analyze issues and refine solutions with others across different contexts.	I apply knowledge across disciplines to design evidence-informed solutions that improve ideas, outcomes, or systems.
Solutions-Oriented Thinking and Decision-Making	I take simple guided actions that help the class during play or learning.	I suggest simple ideas or choices using familiar examples and explain early reasons for my decisions.	I compare possible solutions using reasons or simple evidence and take informed action that improves my class or school.	I evaluate solution options with evidence and criteria, refine ideas with others, and take informed action to address shared problems.	I evaluate solution paths using evidence, criteria, and anticipated consequences and take purposeful action to improve ideas, outcomes, or systems in civic or community contexts.
Contribution and Civic Engagement	I take simple actions with guidance that help our class or group.	I participate in guided decisions that help our class or school in familiar routines.	I help plan or refine actions that improve our classroom or school using reasons or simple evidence.	I take informed action with others to address shared issues across different classes or school contexts.	I take purposeful action that meaningfully advances civic or community issues using evidence-informed reasoning.

Leveled Rubric Learning Progressions

The IMPACTING Leveled Rubric Learning Progressions translate the PreK–12 competency progression into clear, observable descriptions of how learners develop reasoning, evidence use, informed decision-making, and civic contribution over time. While the competency progression describes the overall developmental arc, the leveled rubrics illustrate what this growth looks like in daily learning—from early exploration and simple comparisons to evaluating evidence, designing solutions, and contributing to civic action.

Across Levels 1–5, the rubrics highlight increasing cognitive rigor, independence, ethical responsibility, and transfer of learning, grounded in the boundaries of the IMPACTING domain and aligned with the Portrait’s emphasis on learner ownership. Each level includes learner-facing indicators, reflection prompts, and observable actions that show how learners reason with ideas, apply evidence, evaluate options, and take informed action in familiar, varied, and complex contexts.

Interpreting Growth with an Equity Lens

Learners demonstrate IMPACTING in diverse and culturally grounded ways. Evidence may include observations, community knowledge, lived experience, stories, models, data, designs, or multimodal artifacts—not only written or quantitative sources. Reasoning may be expressed verbally, visually, physically, digitally, or through making and design. Cultural norms shape how learners deliberate, collaborate, and make decisions.

Observable behaviors should be interpreted for their reasoning function and decision-making purpose, not communication style or confidence. Small-scale contributions, asynchronous participation, collaborative sense-making, and reflective problem-posing are valid demonstrations of informed action. Co-construction and guided inquiry are appropriate developmental supports on the path to independent evaluation and action.

Inclusive Use of the Rubrics

These rubrics are tools for growth, reflection, and feedback—not compliance checklists. Educators support IMPACTING by making criteria and evidence expectations visible, offering multiple ways to gather and represent evidence, inviting diverse perspectives and expertise, and providing feedback that emphasizes reasoning, justification, and impact. Learners may demonstrate behaviors across multiple levels depending on context, task complexity, and available supports.

Readiness for the Next Level

A learner is ready for the next level when Proficient behaviors appear consistently and independently in the contexts described for this grade band, as defined within the IMPACTING domain.

Proficient represents the developmental anchor for each level. Extending reflects enrichment and increased depth within the same grade band and is not a prerequisite for advancement. Each rubric progression is a staircase, not a ceiling.



IMPACTING LEVEL 1: Early Learning, PreK

Level 1 Focus

In Level 1 (Early Learning), learners explore materials and ideas, observe what happens, and describe their discoveries using actions, words, or drawings. With guidance, they take simple actions that help the class and begin to develop the earliest forms of evidence-based thinking.

Key Growth Areas in Level 1

- Noticing and describing simple patterns, changes, or effects
- Exploring ideas and materials through guided inquiry
- Representing thinking with gestures, drawings, or simple words
- Acting with guidance to support the classroom community
- Beginning early reasoning through “what happened?” or “what did I see?”

Competency and Indicators

IMPACTING	Emerging	Developing	Proficient (Anchor)	Extending Competence
<p>Level 1 Competency I show what I notice about ideas or problems with help as I explore and learn through simple tasks or play.</p>	<p>I notice or show simple ideas or changes during play, explore materials with help, and share what I saw in simple ways.</p>	<p>I notice what happens during simple tasks or play, show or say what I noticed when prompted, and explore ideas or materials with reminders.</p>	<p>I show what I notice about simple ideas or problems during play or learning and explore tasks or materials independently.</p>	<p>I notice simple ideas or problems in new or changing situations, show what I discovered in different ways, and explore tasks or materials on my own.</p>
<p>Reflection Prompts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did I notice during play or exploration? • What changed or happened when I tried something? • Who helped me show or share what I saw? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did I notice during a simple task? • What did I show or say when someone reminded me? • What did I see that helped me understand what happened? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What idea or change did I notice during learning or play? • How did I show what I discovered? • How did I explore a task or material on my own? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did I notice in a new or changing situation? • How did I show my discovery in a different way? • What did I explore on my own in a new routine or activity?
<p>How I Know I Am Ready to Move On</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I notice simple ideas or changes with help. • I explore materials when someone guides me. • I show what I saw when someone helps me. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I notice simple ideas or problems during play or learning. • I show what I discovered with reminders. • I explore materials or tasks independently in familiar routines. 	<p>I am ready for Level 2 when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I notice simple ideas or problems without help. • I show or describe what I noticed in simple ways. • I explore tasks or materials independently during familiar activities. <p>When I use these Proficient behaviors consistently in familiar learning contexts, I am ready for the next level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient is the developmental anchor. • Extending is enrichment with increasing depth, a healthy stretch within the same grade band, not a prerequisite for moving to the next level. <p>Each rubric progression is a staircase, not a ceiling.</p>

IMPACTING LEVEL 2: Primary, Grades K-2

Level 2 Focus

In Level 2 (Primary Grades), learners move from noticing and describing toward using simple evidence or prior knowledge to explain their choices. They begin to recognize how decisions affect the class and contribute to shared choices or routines with increasing independence.

Key Growth Areas in Level 2

- Asking purposeful questions to understand or clarify
- Comparing ideas or choices using familiar examples
- Explaining why they made a choice using simple reasons or early evidence
- Beginning to evaluate which ideas help the classroom work better
- Participating in guided decision-making that benefits the class or school

Competency and Indicators

IMPACTING	Emerging	Developing	Proficient (Anchor)	Extending Competence
<p>Level 2 Competency I describe simple ideas or problems and use familiar examples or observations as I make sense of my learning in familiar situations.</p>	<p>I describe simple ideas or problems with help, use familiar examples when prompted, and make sense of simple tasks with support.</p>	<p>I describe simple ideas or problems in familiar situations, use familiar examples or observations with reminders, and make sense of simple tasks by sharing what I noticed.</p>	<p>I describe simple ideas or problems and use familiar examples or observations as I make sense of my learning in familiar situations.</p>	<p>I describe simple ideas or problems in new or changing situations, use familiar examples or observations on my own, and share early ideas for what we could try next.</p>
<p>Reflection Prompts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What idea or problem did I notice? • What did I see happen during the task? • Who helped me describe what I noticed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What idea or problem did I describe? • What example or observation helped me understand what happened? • How did I make sense of this task with reminders? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What simple idea or problem did I describe in this activity? • Which familiar example or observation helped me understand my learning? • How did I make sense of the task on my own? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What simple idea or problem did I describe in a new situation? • What example or observation helped me understand what to try next? • How did I share an early idea for what we could try next?
<p>How I Know I Am Ready to Move On</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I describe simple ideas or problems with help. • I use familiar examples when someone reminds me. • I make sense of tasks with support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I describe simple ideas or problems with help. • I use familiar examples when someone reminds me. • I make sense of tasks with support. • Developing → Proficient • I describe simple ideas or problems in familiar situations. • I use familiar examples or observations with reminders. • I make sense of simple tasks by sharing what I noticed. 	<p>I am ready for Level 3 when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I describe simple ideas or problems in familiar situations. • I use familiar examples or observations to understand my learning. • I make sense of simple tasks independently. <p>When I use these Proficient behaviors consistently in familiar learning contexts, I am ready for the next level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient is the developmental anchor. • Extending is enrichment with increasing depth, a healthy stretch within the same grade band, not a prerequisite for moving to the next level. <p>Each rubric progression is a staircase, not a ceiling.</p>

IMPACTING LEVEL 3: Elementary School, Grades 3-5

Level 3 Focus

In Level 3 (Elementary School), learners deepen their reasoning by analyzing problems, comparing solutions with evidence, and carrying out actions that make a meaningful difference. They begin to generate and refine solutions, explain their thinking more clearly, and understand how informed decisions can improve shared learning environments.

Key Growth Areas in Level 3

- Analyzing familiar problems to understand what is happening and why
- Comparing solution options using evidence or examples
- Justifying choices with clear reasoning
- Applying knowledge flexibly across familiar situations
- Taking informed actions that contribute to improvements in class or school
- Reflecting on outcomes to adjust approaches in future tasks

Competency and Indicators

IMPACTING	Emerging	Developing	Proficient (Anchor)	Extending Competence
<p>Level 3 Competency I compare ideas, notice patterns, and use reasons or simple evidence as I explore problems and possibilities in my learning.</p>	<p>I notice simple ideas or changes in familiar tasks, share what I noticed with help, and explore problems or materials when someone guides me.</p>	<p>I compare simple ideas in familiar situations, describe patterns I notice with guidance, and share reasons for my thinking in basic ways.</p>	<p>I compare ideas, notice patterns, and use reasons or simple evidence as I explore problems and possibilities in my learning.</p>	<p>I compare ideas and patterns in new or changing situations, use reasons or simple evidence on my own, and suggest possible next steps or solutions during exploration.</p>
<p>Reflection Prompts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What idea or change did I notice during this task? • What did I try when someone helped me explore? • What did I notice that happened each time? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What ideas did I compare? • What pattern did I notice in the task or problem? • What simple reason helped me understand what happened? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What ideas did I compare today? • What patterns did I notice as I explored the problem? • What reason or evidence helped me understand the possibilities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What patterns did I notice in a new or changing situation? • What ideas did I compare when I explored something new? • What reason or evidence helped me suggest what we might try next?
<p>How I Know I Am Ready to Move On</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I notice simple ideas or changes in familiar tasks. • I explore problems or materials with help. • I share what I noticed when someone guides me. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I compare simple ideas in familiar situations. • I notice simple patterns with reminders. • I use simple reasons to explain what I noticed. 	<p>I am ready for Level 4 when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I compare ideas during exploration • I notice and describe patterns in familiar situations • I use reasons or simple evidence to understand problems and possibilities. <p>When I use these Proficient behaviors consistently in familiar learning contexts, I am ready for the next level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient is the developmental anchor • Extending is enrichment with increasing depth, a healthy stretch within the same grade band, not a prerequisite for moving to the next level. <p>Each rubric progression is a staircase, not a ceiling.</p>

IMPACTING LEVEL 4: Middle School, Grades 6-8

Level 4 Focus

In Level 4 (Middle School), learners use cross-disciplinary knowledge to analyze issues, weigh options against criteria, and act responsibly with peers. They explain their reasoning clearly, compare perspectives, and participate in shared decisions that benefit their classroom or school community. They begin to understand how evidence, criteria, and consequences influence responsible and ethical decision-making.

Key Growth Areas in Level 4

- Applying learning across subjects to understand issues
- Organizing and analyzing information from varied sources
- Evaluating options using evidence and established criteria
- Explaining reasoning clearly to peers or in group decision-making
- Taking informed action with others to address shared issues
- Considering the consequences of decisions in classroom or school contexts
- Beginning early ethical reasoning related to community impact

Competency and Indicators

IMPACTING	Emerging	Developing	Proficient (Anchor)	Extending Competence
<p>Level 4 Competency I analyze issues, evaluate ideas, or solution options using evidence and criteria, and refine solutions as I take informed action with others across different learning contexts.</p>	<p>I identify information or ideas in familiar issues, describe simple differences between options with help, and explore solutions when someone guides me.</p>	<p>I analyze information in familiar issues, compare ideas or options with reminders, and use simple evidence to explain my thinking during guided decisions.</p>	<p>I analyze issues, evaluate ideas, or solution options using evidence and criteria, and refine solutions as I take informed action with others across different learning contexts.</p>	<p>I evaluate ideas or solution options in new or changing situations, use evidence or criteria on my own, and refine solutions as I take informed action during more complex tasks.</p>
<p>Reflection Prompts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What information or idea did I notice in this issue? • What difference did I see between the options? • How did someone help me explore or try a solution? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What information helped me understand this issue? • Which options did I compare? • What evidence helped me explain my thinking? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What issue did I analyze today? • Which ideas or options did I evaluate using evidence or criteria? • How did I refine the solution as I worked with others? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What new or changing situation did I analyze? • Which options did I evaluate on my own using evidence or criteria? • How did I refine and act on a solution during a more complex task?
<p>How I Know I Am Ready to Move On</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I identify information or ideas in familiar issues. • I describe simple differences between options with help. • I explore solutions when someone guides me. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I analyze familiar issues using information. • I compare options with reminders. • I use simple evidence to explain my thinking during guided decisions. 	<p>I am ready for Level 5 when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I analyze issues using relevant information. • I evaluate ideas or options with evidence and criteria. • I refine solutions as I take informed action with others across contexts. <p>When I use these Proficient behaviors consistently in familiar learning contexts, I am ready for the next level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient is the developmental anchor. • Extending is enrichment with increasing depth, a healthy stretch within the same grade band, not a prerequisite for moving to the next level. <p>Each rubric progression is a staircase, not a ceiling.</p>

IMPACTING LEVEL 5: High School, Grades 9-12

Level 5 Focus

In Level 5 (High School), learners integrate evidence, perspectives, and disciplinary knowledge to understand complex issues. They evaluate the quality and relevance of information, design solutions grounded in evidence, and take informed action that contributes to civic or community contexts. They demonstrate informed self-direction in decision-making and reflect on the broader impact of their actions.

Key Growth Areas in Level 5

- Evaluating complex evidence and multiple perspectives
- Applying cross-disciplinary knowledge to real-world issues
- Designing solutions based on evidence, criteria, and ethical considerations
- Anticipating consequences and weighing impact on communities
- Contributing to meaningful civic or community action
- Refining reasoning through reflection and stakeholder input

Competency and Indicators

IMPACTING	Emerging	Developing	Proficient (Anchor)	Extending Competence
<p>Level 5 Competency I analyze issues, evaluate ideas or solution options using evidence and criteria, and refine solutions as I take informed action with others across different learning contexts.</p>	<p>I analyze information about familiar issues, describe simple relationships between ideas with support and take part in guided actions during class or school tasks.</p>	<p>I examine evidence and perspectives in familiar situations, compare options and potential consequences with reminders, and contribute to guided actions that support class or school tasks.</p>	<p>I evaluate evidence, perspectives and consequences, and design evidence-informed solutions as I take purposeful action to improve ideas, outcomes or systems in complex or civic community contexts.</p>	<p>I evaluate complex or conflicting evidence, perspectives, and consequences in new or changing situations, design and refine solutions independently, and take purposeful action that strengthens outcomes or systems in civic or community settings.</p>
<p>Reflection Prompts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What information or idea about the issue did I analyze? • What simple relationships did I notice in the evidence? • How did I take part in guided action? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence or perspective did I examine? • What simple consequences did I compare? • How did I contribute to guided action that helped our class or school? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence, perspective or consequence did I evaluate today? • How did I design a solution based on evidence or criteria? • How did my purposeful action improve an idea, outcome or system? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What complex or conflicting evidence did I evaluate? • How did I refine my solution based on feedback or new information? • How did my action strengthen outcomes or systems in a civic or community setting?
<p>How I Know I Am Ready to Move On</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I analyze information about familiar issues. • I describe simple relationships between ideas with support. • I take part in guided actions during class or school tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I examine evidence and perspectives in familiar tasks. • I compare simple consequences of choices with reminders. • I contribute to guided actions that support class or school tasks. 	<p>I am ready for postsecondary expectations when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I evaluate evidence, perspectives, and consequences in varied contexts. • I design evidence-informed solutions using clear criteria. • I take purposeful action to improve ideas, outcomes or systems. <p>When I use these Proficient behaviors consistently in familiar learning contexts, I am ready for the next level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient is the developmental anchor. • Extending is enrichment with increasing depth, a healthy stretch within the same grade band. <p>Each rubric progression is a staircase, not a ceiling.</p>

Bridges Between PreK-Postsecondary Levels

Level 1 → Level 2

By the end of Level 1, learners show what they notice through gestures, movement, simple words, or actions during play or simple tasks. They begin to share early ideas and respond when something in an activity changes. In Level 2, learners are ready to describe simple ideas or problems and use familiar examples or observations to make sense of tasks. They begin moving from showing noticing to making early interpretations of what is happening in familiar situations.

Level 2 → Level 3

By the end of Level 2, learners describe ideas or problems, use familiar examples or observations, and participate in simple sense-making routines in predictable contexts. In Level 3, learners are ready to compare ideas, notice patterns, and use reasons or simple evidence to explore problems and possibilities. They begin to draw connections, see similarities or differences, and generate early possibilities for what could be tried next.

Level 3 → Level 4

By the end of Level 3, learners compare ideas, notice patterns, and use simple evidence to justify early reasoning within familiar tasks. They begin to recognize how ideas connect and how evidence can support decisions. In Level 4, learners are ready to analyze issues, evaluate ideas or solution options using evidence and criteria, and refine solutions with others. They extend reasoning across different contexts and begin to take informed action in collaborative settings.

Level 4 → Level 5

By the end of Level 4, learners analyze issues, evaluate ideas or solution options using evidence and criteria, and refine solutions collaboratively across varied contexts. They demonstrate an emerging ability to adapt reasoning for new situations. In Level 5, learners are ready to evaluate evidence, perspectives and consequences, design evidence-informed solutions, and take purposeful action to improve ideas, outcomes, or systems in complex or civic contexts. They demonstrate ethical reasoning, systems thinking, and independent decision-making.

Level 5 → Postsecondary

By the end of Level 5, learners evaluate evidence and perspectives, anticipate consequences, design solutions, and take informed action aligned with community well-being and ethical reasoning. They are ready in postsecondary settings to:

- Analyze complex issues across disciplines
- Evaluate the credibility and relevance of information
- Lead or contribute to collaborative decision-making
- Engage in civic, organizational, or community problem-solving
- Apply informed judgment in academic, professional, and community contexts

THRIVING

How will I thrive?



Learner Point of View

“I notice what I am feeling and needing, adjust when things get hard or change, and act with purpose so I can stay steady and move forward in school, work, and life.”

Purpose

The THRIVING domain describes how learners understand and support their well-being, respond to challenges, adapt across contexts, and act with integrity and purpose. As learners grow, they develop awareness and strategies to stay steady, navigate change, and make values-aligned decisions. Over time, they move from expressing simple feelings and needs and trying basic strategies with help to evaluating habits, adapting responses across contexts, and navigating challenges with increasing resilience, confidence, and purpose.

Core Actions

Learners in this domain:

- Recognize and describe feelings, needs and habits
- Use strategies to recover or re-engage when something feels hard
- Adjust approaches across activities, situations, or contexts
- Persist when tasks or conditions change
- Make choices aligned with values, integrity, and purpose

Attributes

- **Emotional Awareness, Well-Being, and Balance**
Recognizing feelings, needs, and habits, noticing stressors or imbalance, and maintaining steadiness and well-being across situations.
- **Adaptability and Flexibility**
Adjusting approaches or mindsets to respond to change, uncertainty, or unfamiliar conditions.
- **Resilience, Recovery, and Persistence**
Using strategies to recover or re-engage, persisting through difficulty, and sustaining effort when challenges arise.
- **Purpose, Integrity, and Values-Aligned Choices**
Making decisions that reflect values and goals and acting with honesty, responsibility, and purpose across varied contexts.

Social-emotional Learning Alignment

THRIVING aligns with CASEL’s Self-Awareness, Self-Management, and Responsible Decision-Making, including:

- Recognizing feelings and needs
- Managing stress and challenges
- Recovering and re-engaging
- Reflecting on habits and responses
- Making purpose-aligned choices

Instructional Stance

Educators support THRIVING by:

- Modeling emotional awareness and grounding strategies
- Providing consistent routines and opportunities for co-regulation
- Offering flexible pathways and recovery opportunities
- Supporting reflection on habits, choices, and needs
- Creating spaces for values-aligned action

Across PreK-12

Across PreK–12, learners strengthen their ability to understand themselves, respond to challenges, and navigate change with confidence and purpose. They build habits that support well-being, use strategies to recover and re-engage, adjust approaches across situations, and make decisions aligned with values and goals. Over time, learners grow from expressing basic needs and trying simple strategies with help to acting with integrity and purpose in complex or unpredictable situations.

Competency Progression

The competency statements outline a strategic increase in challenge and self-reliance from PreK through graduation, and define how students navigate the core domain question as they progress through different developmental stages.

Level 1 Early Learning PreK	Level 2 Primary School Grades K-2	Level 3 Elementary School Grades 3-5	Level 4 Middle School Grades 6-8	Level 5 High School Grades 9-12
I notice my feelings and needs, use simple strategies with help, and try again when something feels hard during activities or play.	I describe my feelings and needs, use familiar strategies with reminders, and begin adjusting what I do so I can stay steady, balanced, and ready to engage.	I notice patterns in what supports my well-being, use strategies independently, and adjust my approach when something feels difficult so I can recover and re-engage.	I evaluate what affects my well-being, adapt my strategies across classes and situations, and navigate challenges or change with growing independence, purpose, and flexibility.	I evaluate my habits, choices, and well-being across contexts, align my actions with my values, and navigate challenges with integrity, resilience, and purpose in school, work, and life.

Attributes and Attribute Progressions

THRIVING attributes are reflected in the competency progression and expanded with more detail here for reference.

THRIVING ATTRIBUTES	Level 1 Early Learning PreK	Level 2 Primary School Grades K-2	Level 3 Elementary School Grades 3-5	Level 4 Middle School Grades 6-8	Level 5 High School Grades 9-12
Emotional Awareness, Well-being, and Balance	I show simple feelings or needs, notice changes in comfort, and begin using simple strategies with help to feel steady during activities or play.	I describe my feelings, needs, or early stress signals and use familiar strategies with reminders to feel steady in predictable routines.	I notice patterns in what helps me stay steady, use strategies independently, and adjust my approach when something feels difficult so I can recover and re-engage.	I evaluate how habits, feelings, or situations affect my well-being and adapt my strategies across classes and situations to stay steady during challenges or change.	I evaluate my habits, choices, and well-being across contexts and refine my strategies so I can sustain balance, purpose, and well-being in school, work, and life.
Adaptability and Flexibility	I follow simple routines with help and try again with support when something feels hard or changes during activities or play.	I adjust small actions with reminders when routines change, or something feels hard, and use familiar strategies with guidance to stay steady.	I adjust my approach when something feels difficult, choose strategies independently in familiar situations, and begin adapting them in new or changing tasks.	I adapt my strategies across classes, expectations, and situations, and respond to change or uncertainty with growing independence and purpose.	I adapt my strategies across different contexts, anticipate challenges, and act flexibly and intentionally when situations become complex or uncertain.
Resilience, Recovery, and Persistence	I try again with help when something feels hard and use simple strategies to return to activities or play.	I keep trying during activities or play with guidance, use familiar strategies with reminders, and begin adjusting what I do when something feels difficult.	I use strategies independently to recover or re-engage after difficulty and sustain effort across tasks by adjusting my approach when needed.	I recover from challenges with purpose, adapt strategies across classes or situations, and persist through difficulty with growing confidence and flexibility.	I navigate challenge or change with integrity and resilience, refine strategies to stay engaged in complex situations, and persist in ways aligned with long-term well-being.
Purpose, Integrity, and Values-Aligned Choices	I show needs or preferences in simple ways and begin making early choices with help that support my comfort or participation.	I describe simple needs or preferences, make guided choices that help me stay steady, and begin acting in ways that support my well-being.	I explain why something supports my well-being, make choices that help me recover or re-engage, and learn from mistakes to stay purposeful.	I evaluate how my habits, feelings or situations relate to my values and make choices that help me navigate challenges or change with purpose and integrity.	I evaluate my choices and well-being across contexts, align my actions with my values, and navigate challenges with integrity, resilience and long-term purpose.

Leveled Rubric Learning Progressions

The THRIVING Leveled Rubric Learning Progressions translate the PreK–12 competency progression into clear, observable descriptions of how learners understand and support their well-being, respond to difficulty, and navigate change with increasing independence, flexibility, and purpose. While the competency progression describes the overall developmental arc, the leveled rubrics illustrate what this growth looks like in daily learning—from noticing feelings and using simple strategies with help to evaluating habits, aligning choices with values, and navigating challenges with integrity and resilience.

Across Levels 1–5, the rubrics highlight increasing emotional awareness, adaptive thinking, and values-aligned decision-making, grounded in the boundaries of the THRIVING domain and aligned with the Portrait’s emphasis on learner ownership. Each level includes learner-facing indicators, reflection prompts, and observable actions that show how learners recover, adapt, persist, and act with purpose in familiar, varied, and complex contexts.

Interpreting Growth with an Equity Lens

Learners demonstrate THRIVING in diverse and culturally grounded ways. Emotional awareness, recovery, and persistence may appear through movement, pacing, reflection, proximity, sensory regulation, humor, or help-seeking—not only through verbal expression. Cultural norms, neurodivergence, identity, and context shape how learners show regulation, adaptability, and resilience.

Observable behaviors should be interpreted for their adaptive purpose and function, not surface appearance. Co-regulation, shared planning, and supported recovery are valid developmental steps toward independence. Persistence may include seeking support, adjusting pace, or renegotiating expectations, not simply “pushing through.”

Inclusive Use of the Rubrics

These rubrics are tools for growth, reflection, and feedback—not compliance checklists. Educators support THRIVING by making strategies visible, offering multiple pathways for recovery and re-engagement, normalizing help-seeking, and designing environments where learners can reflect, adjust, and act with purpose. Learners may demonstrate behaviors across multiple levels depending on context, task demands, and available supports.

Readiness for the Next Level

A learner is ready for the next level when Proficient behaviors appear consistently and independently in the contexts described for this grade band, as defined within the THRIVING domain. Proficient represents the developmental anchor for each level. Extending reflects enrichment and increased depth within the same grade band and is not a prerequisite for advancement. Each rubric progression is a staircase, not a ceiling.



THRIVING LEVEL 1: Early Learning, PreK

Level 1 Focus

In Level 1 (Early Learning), learners begin to recognize their internal signals—such as feelings, needs, and comfort levels—and use simple strategies with adult modeling to manage small challenges or transitions. They practice trying again after difficulty, participate in routines that support balance and calm, and begin expressing what helps them feel steady and ready to take part in activities and play.

Key Growth Areas in Level 1

- Noticing simple feelings, physical signals, or changes in comfort
- Using simple recovery or calming strategies with adult guidance
- Beginning to return to learning after frustration
- Recognizing when routines support calm and readiness
- Showing early forms of persistence with co-regulation
- Expressing needs in simple ways (words, gestures, augmentative, and alternative communication, visuals)

Competency and Indicators

THRIVING	Emerging	Developing	Proficient (Anchor)	Extending Competence
<p>Level 1 Competency I notice my feelings and needs, use simple strategies with help, and try again when something feels hard during activities and play.</p>	<p>I show simple feelings or needs, use a simple strategy when someone helps me start it, and try again with support when activities or play feel hard.</p>	<p>I name simple feelings or needs with reminders, use a familiar strategy with guidance, and try again during activities or play when something feels hard.</p>	<p>I notice my feelings and needs, use simple strategies with help, and try again when something feels hard during activities and play.</p>	<p>I notice my feelings and needs in new or changing routines, choose familiar strategies with less help, and try again on my own when activities or play feel hard.</p>
<p>Reflection Prompts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What feeling or need did I notice during activities or play? • What simple strategy did someone help me start? • When did something feel hard? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What feeling or need did I name? • What familiar strategy helped me try again? • How did someone help me when I felt stuck? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What feeling or need did I notice? • What simple strategy helped me when things felt hard? • How did I try again on my own during activities or play? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What feeling or need did I notice in a new or changing routine? • Which familiar strategy did I choose with less help? • How did I try again on my own during activities or play?
<p>How I Know I Am Ready to Move On</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I show simple feelings or needs. • I use a simple strategy when someone helps me start it. • I try again when someone helps me. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I name simple feelings or needs with reminders. • I use familiar strategies with guidance. • I try again during activities or play with reminders. 	<p>I am ready for Level 2 when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I notice and express simple feelings or needs. • I use simple strategies with help. • I try again when something feels hard during activities or play. <p>When I use these Proficient behaviors consistently in familiar activities, I am ready for the next level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient is the developmental anchor. • Extending is enrichment with increasing depth, a healthy stretch within the same grade band. <p>Each rubric progression is a staircase, not a ceiling.</p>

THRIVING LEVEL 2: Primary, Grades K-2

Level 2 Focus

In Level 2 (Primary Grades), learners begin describing their feelings and needs more clearly, use familiar strategies across predictable routines, and respond to small changes with adult guidance. They start to notice when something helps them stay balanced and begin adapting their actions with reminders.

Key Growth Areas in Level 2

- Describing feelings, needs, and early stress signals
- Using familiar strategies with reminders (breathing, movement, sensory tools, asking for help)
- Beginning to adjust actions or plans when routines shift
- Managing simple challenges with guidance
- Noticing when something helps them recover
- Sustaining engagement in learning or play after minor difficulty

Competency and Indicators

THRIVING	Emerging	Developing	Proficient (Anchor)	Extending Competence
<p>Level 2 Competency I describe my feelings and needs, use familiar strategies with reminders, and begin adjusting what I do so I can stay steady, balanced, and ready to engage.</p>	<p>I show or name simple feelings or needs with help, use a familiar strategy when someone starts it, and keep trying during activities or play with support when something feels hard.</p>	<p>I describe simple feelings or needs with reminders, use familiar strategies with guidance, and adjust small actions during activities or play when something feels hard.</p>	<p>I describe my feelings and needs, use familiar strategies with reminders, and begin adjusting what I do so I can stay steady, balanced, and ready to engage.</p>	<p>I describe my feelings and needs in new or changing routines, choose familiar strategies with fewer reminders, and adjust what I do on my own so I can stay steady and balanced during activities or play.</p>
<p>Reflection Prompts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What feeling or need did I show today? • What familiar strategy did someone help me get started with? • When did I need help trying again or staying steady? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What feeling or need did I describe? • What familiar strategy helped me when something felt hard? • What small action did I adjust with a reminder? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What feeling or need did I describe today? • Which familiar strategy did I choose when someone reminded me? • How did adjusting what I did help me stay steady and engaged? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What feeling or need did I describe in a new or changing routine? • Which familiar strategy did I choose with fewer reminders? • How did I adjust what I did on my own to stay steady and balanced?
<p>How I Know I Am Ready to Move On</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I show or name simple feelings or needs with help. • I use familiar strategies when someone starts them. • I keep trying with support when something feels hard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I describe simple feelings or needs with reminders. • I use familiar strategies with guidance. • I adjust small actions with reminders when something feels hard. 	<p>I am ready for Level 3 when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I describe my feelings and needs without help. • I use familiar strategies with reminders. • I adjust what I do so I can stay steady and engaged in familiar routines. <p>When I use these Proficient behaviors consistently in familiar activities, I am ready for the next level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient is the developmental anchor. • Extending is enrichment with increasing depth, a healthy stretch within the same grade band, not a prerequisite for moving to the next level. <p>Each rubric progression is a staircase, not a ceiling.</p>

THRIVING LEVEL 3: Elementary School, Grades 3-5

Level 3 Focus

In Level 3 (Elementary School), learners use strategies independently across familiar contexts, reflect on what supports their well-being, and adapt their actions or approach to stay steady and re-engage after difficulty. They begin learning from mistakes, practicing constructive recovery, and sustaining effort with greater autonomy.

Key Growth Areas in Level 3

- Noticing patterns in what supports balance and recovery
- Using strategies independently
- Adjusting approach when difficulty arises
- Reflecting on mistakes and learning from them
- Re-engaging after a challenge
- Sustaining effort across longer tasks and routines
- Increasing ownership of well-being practices

Competency and Indicators

THRIVING	Emerging	Developing	Proficient (Anchor)	Extending Competence
<p>Level 3 Competency I notice patterns in what supports my well-being, use strategies independently, and adjust my approach when something feels difficult so I can recover and re-engage.</p>	<p>I notice what helps me feel steady in familiar tasks, use simple strategies when someone prompts me, and try again with support when something feels difficult.</p>	<p>I notice what helps me feel steady in familiar tasks, use familiar strategies on my own in simple situations, and adjust small actions with reminders when something feels difficult.</p>	<p>I notice patterns in what supports my well-being, use strategies independently, and adjust my approach when something feels difficult so I can recover and re-engage.</p>	<p>I notice patterns in what supports my well-being in new or changing situations, choose and adapt strategies on my own, and adjust my approach in different contexts so I can recover and re-engage.</p>
<p>Reflection Prompts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What helped me feel steady during this task? • What strategy did I use when someone reminded me? • What did I do when something felt difficult? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What pattern do I notice about what helps me feel steady? • Which strategy did I use on my own in simple situations? • What small change did I make when something felt hard? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What patterns do I notice in what supports my well-being? • Which strategies did I use independently today? • How did adjusting my approach help me recover and re-engage? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What patterns do I notice in new or changing situations? • Which strategies did I choose and adapt on my own? • How did I adjust across different contexts to recover and re-engage?
<p>How I Know I Am Ready to Move On</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I notice what helps me feel steady in familiar tasks. • I use simple strategies when prompted. • I try again with support when something feels difficult. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I notice what helps me feel steady with reminders. • I used familiar strategies on my own in simple situations. • I adjust small actions when something feels difficult. 	<p>I am ready for Level 4 when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I notice patterns in what supports my well-being. • I use strategies independently across familiar situations. • I adjust my approach when something feels difficult so I can recover and re-engage. <p>When I use these Proficient behaviors consistently in familiar activities, I am ready for the next level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient is the developmental anchor. • Extending is enrichment with increasing depth, a healthy stretch within the same grade band, not a prerequisite for moving to the next level. <p>Each rubric progression is a staircase, not a ceiling.</p>

THRIVING LEVEL 4: Middle School, Grades 6-8

Level 4 Focus

In Level 4 (Middle School), learners begin integrating strategies across multiple classes, responsibilities, and social experiences. They reflect on what influences their well-being, adapt their plans when situations change, persist through more complex challenges, and make choices that align with their emerging values and sense of who they are becoming.

Key Growth Areas in Level 4

- Evaluating habits, routines, and emotional patterns
- Adapting strategies across classes, demands, and situations
- Navigating transitions, uncertainty, and shifting expectations
- Recovering from mistakes with purpose
- Practicing flexibility in response to stress or change
- Making choices aligned with well-being and emerging values

Competency and Indicators

THRIVING	Emerging	Developing	Proficient (Anchor)	Extending Competence
<p>Level 4 Competency I evaluate what affects my well-being, adapt my strategies across classes and situations, and navigate challenges or change with growing independence, purpose, and flexibility.</p>	<p>I recognize some feelings, habits, or situations that affect my well-being with help, use familiar strategies when someone suggests them, and try to adjust my approach with guidance when challenges or changes happen.</p>	<p>I describe how some habits, feelings, or situations affect my well-being in familiar routines, choose familiar strategies with reminders, and adjust what I do during challenges or changes with guidance.</p>	<p>I evaluate what affects my well-being, adapt my strategies across classes and situations, and navigate challenges or change with growing independence, purpose and flexibility.</p>	<p>I evaluate what affects my well-being in new or changing situations, choose and refine strategies on my own, and navigate challenges or change with increasing confidence and purpose across different contexts.</p>
<p>Reflection Prompts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What feeling, habit or situation affected my well-being today? • What familiar strategy did someone suggest that helped me? • When something changed, how did an adult help me adjust? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What habit, feeling, or situation affected my well-being today? • Which familiar strategy did I choose with reminders? • What did I adjust when something felt difficult, or routines shifted? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What affected my well-being across different classes or situations? • How did I adapt my strategies today? • How did I navigate a challenge or change with purpose or flexibility? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What affected my well-being in a new or changing situation? • How did I choose or refine strategies on my own? • How did I navigate challenges or change with confidence and purpose across different contexts?
<p>How I Know I Am Ready to Move On</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I recognize some feelings, habits or situations that affect my well-being with help. • I use familiar strategies when someone suggests them. • I try to adjust what I do when challenges or changes happen with guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I describe how some habits, feelings or situations affect my well-being. • I choose familiar strategies with reminders. • I adjust my approach with guidance during challenges or changes. 	<p>I am ready for Level 5 when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I evaluate what affects my well-being across classes or situations. • I adapt my strategies independently. • I navigate challenges or change with purpose and flexibility. <p>When I use these Proficient behaviors consistently in familiar activities, I am ready for the next level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient is the developmental anchor. • Extending is enrichment with increasing depth, a healthy stretch within the same grade band, not a prerequisite for moving to the next level. <p>Each rubric progression is a staircase, not a ceiling.</p>

THRIVING LEVEL 5: High School, Grades 9-12

Level 5 Focus

In Level 5 (High School), learners refine strategies across diverse contexts, take responsibility for well-being, navigate uncertainty or challenge with purpose and integrity, and make values-based choices that support resilience, balance, and growth.

Key Growth Areas in Level 5

- Evaluating habits, roles, and environments across life contexts
- Refining strategies to sustain well-being in complex or unfamiliar situations
- Taking purposeful, values-based action
- Navigating challenge, uncertainty, or transition with resilience
- Anticipating stressors and planning proactively
- Acting with authenticity, integrity, and long-term purpose
- Balancing responsibilities across school, work, and community

Competency and Indicators

THRIVING	Emerging	Developing	Proficient (Anchor)	Extending Competence
<p>Level 5 Competency I evaluate my habits, choices, and well-being across contexts, align my actions with my values, and navigate challenges with integrity, resilience, and purpose in school, work, and life.</p>	<p>I describe my feelings, habits, or choices in familiar situations with help, use familiar strategies when someone suggests them, and try to adjust what I do when challenges happen with support.</p>	<p>I analyze how my habits, choices, or situations affect my well-being in familiar contexts, choose familiar strategies with reminders, and adjust what I do during challenges or changes with guidance.</p>	<p>I evaluate my habits, choices, and well-being across contexts, align my actions with my values, and navigate challenges with integrity, resilience, and purpose in school, work, and life.</p>	<p>I evaluate habits, choices, and well-being in new or complex situations, choose and refine strategies on my own, and navigate challenges or change with increasing confidence, resilience, and purpose across different contexts.</p>
<p>Reflection Prompts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What feeling, habit or choice affected my well-being in this familiar situation? • What familiar strategy did someone suggest that helped me? • How did someone guide me when I experienced a challenge? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What habit, choice or situation affected my well-being today? • Which strategy did I choose with reminders? • How did I adjust what I did when something became challenging? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What habits, choices, or situations affected my well-being across contexts? • How did I align my actions with my values today? • How did I navigate a challenge or change with resilience and purpose? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What affected my well-being in new or complex situations? • How did I refine my strategies on my own across different contexts? • How did my decisions reflect my values and support resilience and purpose?
<p>How I Know I Am Ready to Move On</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I describe feelings, habits or choices in familiar situations with help. • I use familiar strategies when someone suggests them. • I adjust what I do with guidance when I experience challenge or change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I analyze how habits, choices, or environments affect my well-being. • I use familiar strategies independently in predictable situations. • I adjust my approach when tasks or expectations change. 	<p>I am ready for postsecondary expectations when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I evaluate habits, choices, and well-being across contexts. • I align my actions with my values and purpose. • I navigate challenge or change with integrity, resilience, and purpose. <p>When I use these Proficient behaviors consistently in familiar and varied contexts, I am ready for the next level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient is the developmental anchor. • Extending is enrichment with increasing depth, a healthy stretch within the same grade band. <p>Each rubric progression is a staircase, not a ceiling.</p>

Bridges Between PreK-Postsecondary Levels

Level 1 → Level 2

By the end of Level 1, learners notice and show their feelings and needs, try simple strategies with help, and begin trying again after small challenges during learning or play. They are learning to recognize discomfort, frustration, or imbalance, and use adult-supported strategies to return to learning. In Level 2, learners are ready to describe their feelings and needs, use familiar strategies with reminders, and begin adjusting what they do when something feels hard or routines change. They build greater self-awareness and take early steps toward managing challenges with support.

Level 2 → Level 3

By the end of Level 2, learners describe feelings and needs, use familiar strategies with reminders, and begin adjusting actions to stay steady or re-engage in activities or learning when routines shift. In Level 3, learners are ready to notice patterns in what supports their well-being, use strategies independently, and adjust their approach when something feels difficult. They grow in independence, applying what they've noticed to re-engage and keep growing across predictable school tasks.

Level 3 → Level 4

By the end of Level 3, learners independently use strategies, adjust behavior in familiar situations, and begin noticing patterns across tasks that help them stay balanced or focused. In Level 4, learners are ready to evaluate what affects their well-being, adapt strategies across different classes and settings, and navigate challenges or change with greater independence and purpose. They extend their adaptability to new contexts and begin planning for moments that may be difficult.

Level 4 → Level 5

By the end of Level 4, learners adapt strategies across varied conditions, evaluate what affects their well-being, and navigate changing expectations with purpose and flexibility. In Level 5, learners are ready to evaluate their habits, choices, and well-being across diverse contexts, align actions with values and purpose, and navigate challenges with integrity and resilience in school, work, and life. They demonstrate the capacity to plan, act intentionally, and respond with maturity in complex situations.

Level 5 → Postsecondary

By the end of Level 5, learners evaluate habits, choices, and well-being across contexts, align actions with values and purpose, refine strategies independently, and navigate complex challenges with resilience and integrity. They are ready in postsecondary settings to:

- Manage personal well-being across academic, work, and life environments
- Adjust strategies and routines in response to changing demands
- Make values-aligned decisions grounded in purpose
- Navigate uncertainty and complexity with confidence
- Sustain learning, relationships, and commitments through challenge

Using the Portrait-Aligned Competency and Rubric Progressions

Nevada’s competency and rubric progressions describe how learners grow from early learning through graduation in the capacities defined by the Portrait of a Nevada Learner. These progressions provide shared language for understanding whole-learner development and supporting meaningful learning experiences across grades, subjects, and contexts. This section explains how different members of the learning community can use the framework to support learner growth.

How Educators Use the Progressions

Educators use the Portrait-aligned competencies and rubrics to:

- Clarify learning intentions using Portrait domains and grade-band competencies
- Support feedback, reflection, conferring, and student goal setting
- Design learning experiences that build academic understanding and whole-learner capacities
- Notice and interpret a range of learner behaviors and evidence
- Plan instruction that honors diverse communication and demonstration styles

Educators use the rubrics as tools for learning and growth, not grading.

How Students Use the Progressions

Students use the progressions to:

- Understand what they are growing toward in each Portrait domain
- Reflect on their strengths, needs, habits, and choices
- Self-assess using age-appropriate indicators and examples
- Set meaningful, Portrait-aligned goals
- Describe their learning using common language

This strengthens learner agency, metacognition, and ownership.

How Families Use the Progressions

Families use the progressions to:

- Learn how their child is growing as a learner, friend, problem-solver, and community member
- Ask questions that support reflection and well-being
- Encourage persistence, belonging, and purpose
- Celebrate growth across school, community, and home settings

A family guide with conversation prompts is included in [Appendix A](#).

How Leaders Use the Progressions

School and district leaders use the progressions to:

- Align school plans, structures, and routines with the Portrait
- Support shared understanding of whole-learner development
- Facilitate calibration conversations across teams, and grade levels
- Provide time, conditions, and professional learning for Portrait-aligned practices
- Ensure coherence across initiatives, curriculum, and learning experiences

The framework becomes a common lens for planning, communication and improvement.

Cross-Grades and Cross-Settings Consistency

The progression system supports consistency by:

- Providing grade-band competencies that define expected outcomes
- Using rubrics with Proficient as the developmental anchor
- Offering emerging, developing, and extending indicators that describe typical growth
- Ensuring developmental expectations build logically across early learning, elementary school, middle school, and high school
- Honoring diverse ways of demonstrating progress

This structure ensures fairness and clarity while allowing flexibility for context, culture, and learner needs.

Evidence of Portrait-Aligned Growth

Portrait-aligned growth can be observed in:

- Daily actions and behaviors during learning
- Conversations, reflections, and self-assessments
- Products and performances
- Peer interactions and group work
- Learner choices, strategies, and decisions
- Multimodal artifacts (writing, art, video, design, models, digital media)

These forms of evidence support feedback, reflection, and continuous improvement.

A Shared Commitment to Learner Growth

The Portrait of a Nevada Learner reflects Nevada's commitment to helping all learners grow into capable, connected, purposeful people. These competencies and rubrics support that vision by strengthening shared language, guiding reflection, and helping families, educators, leaders, and students work together to support whole-learner development.

This framework is **not** meant to be a grading tool or checklist. It is a roadmap that supports growth, equity, belonging, and opportunity for every learner.

A shared statewide commitment to the growth of every Nevada learner

The Portrait of a Nevada Learner describes the capacities that young people need to succeed in learning, in their communities, and in their futures. The competency and rubric progressions in this framework describe how those capacities grow from early learning through graduation. Together they provide a clear and coherent picture of how learners understand themselves, build relationships, use evidence, and navigate challenges across their school years.

Nevada educators, families and community partners share a responsibility to help learners grow in each of the four domains of the Portrait. Learners grow when they understand what they are working toward, when they experience meaningful and challenging learning, and when they receive feedback that supports ownership and reflection. The progressions in this framework help learners describe their growth and set goals. They help educators design tasks, gather evidence, and calibrate expectations. They help families understand how learning develops across grade bands.

Nevada is committed to creating learning environments where every learner can become more **EMPOWERED** in understanding how they learn, more **CONNECTED** in building relationships and community, more skillful at **MAKING AN IMPACT** using reasoning and evidence, and better able to **THRIVE** while navigating challenges and change.

The Portrait is a statewide promise. These progressions help fulfill that promise by supporting the daily actions, decisions, and relationships that help learners grow into the people they can become.

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KEY

CF = Competency Fellow
CC = Competency Champion
RW = Rubric Workshop
LP = Final Learning Progressions Workshop
Bold = Engaged in all phases of the work

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CONNECTING Domain Specific

Collaboration | Communication | Empathy | Respect

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EMPOWERING Domain Specific

Reflection | Curiosity | Self-Aware | Balance

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IMPACTING Domain Specific

Purposeful Impact | Critical Thinkers | Creative Problem-Solvers | Civic Engagement

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THRIVING Domain Specific

Resilient | Courageous | Intellectual Agility | Integrity

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APPENDIX A

Family and Caregivers Guide Supporting Portrait-Aligned Growth

This guide is designed to help families and caregivers understand how learners grow over time and how you can support that growth at home and in everyday life. As young people develop, they grow in several interconnected ways: understanding themselves as learners, building relationships with others, using their learning to think and solve problems, and navigating challenges and change. Growth looks different at every age, and there are many valid ways learners show progress.

Nevada's Portrait of a Learner describes the knowledge, habits, and capacities that help children grow in school, in their communities, and in their futures. The competency and rubric progressions in this framework show how learners develop these capacities from early learning through graduation. This family and caregivers guide offers language you can use to talk with your child about their growth and how you can support their learning at home.

Understanding the Four Portrait Domains

EMPOWERING

How will I grow in my learning?

Learners understand themselves as learners. They notice their strengths and needs, use strategies to focus and stay ready to learn and advocate for what they need as they grow.

CONNECTING

How do I build and sustain relationships and community?

Learners notice others' feelings, communicate clearly, collaborate with classmates, and help create learning spaces where everyone feels included.

IMPACTING

How will I contribute to make an impact?

Learners explore ideas, use reasoning and evidence to make sense of problems, compare possibilities, and take informed action that helps their class, school, or community.

THRIVING

How will I thrive?

Learners understand their feelings and needs, use strategies to recover and re-engage when things feel hard, adapt when situations change, and make choices aligned with their values and purpose.

How Families and Caregivers Can Use This Guide

You do not need to be an expert to support your child's growth. Small conversations matter. You can:

- Help your child talk about their feelings, needs and ideas
- Practice simple strategies together at home
- Encourage them to notice what helps them learn, connect, make an impact, or stay steady
- Highlight strengths and celebrate effort
- Support them in describing what they tried and what they learned

When families, caregivers, and schools share a common language for learning and well-being, children feel supported, confident and connected as they grow.

How Families and Caregivers Can Support Learning and Growth

Families and caregivers play a powerful role in helping children grow across these four domains. You support learning when you:

- Listen to your child talk about their day
- Ask questions that help them reflect
- Notice when they are trying something new
- Encourage persistence when something feels hard
- Celebrate progress, small or big

These conversations help children build confidence, a sense of belonging and a sense of ownership over their learning.

The following sections describe what learning growth often looks like at different stages and offer practical ways families and caregivers can support learners in developmentally appropriate, strengths-based ways.

PreK (Early Learning)

What learners are developing

In early learning, children are beginning to understand their feelings, needs, and reactions. They are also learning how to connect with others, take turns, share attention, and explore the world around them through play and interaction. They are learning how to take part in routines, try new activities, and stay engaged with support. At this stage, learners rely heavily on trusted adults to model strategies, provide reassurance, and help them name what they are experiencing.

What this looks like

- Showing feelings through words, actions, or behavior
- Playing alongside others and beginning to interact with peers
- Trying new routines with encouragement
- Needing reminders, modeling, and reassurance
- Beginning to calm themselves with adult support

How families and caregivers can support

- Name feelings and reactions as they happen (“You look frustrated,” “That made you excited”).
- Keep routines predictable while gently introducing new experiences.
- Model simple strategies, such as taking a breath, asking for help, or taking a short break.
- Celebrate effort, curiosity, and moments of cooperation, not just outcomes.

Conversation starters

- “How did that activity make you feel?”
- “What helped you keep trying?”
- “Who helped you today, and how?”
- “What did you and someone else figure out together?”

Grades K-2 (Primary)

What learners are developing

In the primary grades, learners begin to describe their strengths, needs, feelings, and habits more clearly. They are also learning how to learn with others, listen to different perspectives, and use their learning to make sense of new ideas and everyday situations. They are learning to use familiar strategies to stay focused, manage emotions, and participate in learning routines. With guidance, learners start to notice what helps them learn and how to ask for support.

What this looks like

- Talking about what feels easy or challenging
- Participating in group learning and shared activities
- Using familiar strategies with reminders
- Beginning to reflect on their learning experiences
- Asking for help with adult encouragement

How families and caregivers can support

- Ask learners what helps them learn best and listen closely to their responses.
- Practice simple goal setting, such as choosing one thing to work on each week.
- Reinforce strategies used at school, like organizing materials or taking movement breaks.
- Normalize mistakes as part of learning and growth, including when working with others or trying new ideas.

Conversation starters

- “What helped you learn today?”
- “What was tricky, and what did you do about it?”
- “What can we try next time if that feels hard again?”
- “Who did you learn with today, and what did you learn together?”

Grades 3-5 (Elementary)

What learners are developing

In upper elementary grades, learners build greater independence and awareness of how they learn. They are also strengthening how they work with others, explaining their thinking, and applying what they are learning to real situations and problems. They begin using strategies more intentionally, reflecting on progress, and adjusting approaches when something is not working. Learners are developing confidence in explaining their thinking and taking more responsibility for their learning.

What this looks like

- Describing learning strengths and challenges
- Explaining ideas and listening to others' perspectives
- Choosing and adapting strategies with support
- Reflecting on progress toward goals
- Beginning to advocate for learning needs

How families and caregivers can support

- Encourage learners to explain how they approached a task, not just the result.
- Support planning and organization using calendars, checklists, or routines.
- Help learners reflect on what strategies worked and what could change next time.
- Reinforce that asking for help, sharing ideas, and learning with others are strengths, not weaknesses.

Conversation starters

- "What strategy did you use, and why?"
- "What did you change when something did not work?"
- "What is a goal you are working toward right now?"
- "How did someone else's idea help you think differently?"

Grades 6-8 (Middle)

What learners are developing

During the middle grades, learners experience significant cognitive, social, and emotional growth. They are learning to navigate more complex relationships, collaborate with peers, and use their learning to analyze situations, solve problems, and make informed choices. They are learning to manage increased expectations, changing routines, and stronger peer influences. Learners build skills in planning, organization, self-reflection, and adjusting strategies as learning becomes more complex.

What this looks like

- Describing learning strengths and challenges
- Explaining ideas and listening to others' perspectives
- Choosing and adapting strategies with support
- Reflecting on progress toward goals
- Beginning to advocate for learning needs

How families and caregivers can support

- Help learners create systems for managing time, tasks, and materials.
- Encourage reflection on what is working and what feels overwhelming.
- Validate emotions during transitions and normalize asking for support.
- Partner with learners to problem-solve challenges, including academic tasks and social situations, rather than fixing them for them.

Conversation starters

- "What feels most manageable right now, and what feels hardest?"
- "What strategy are you trying this week?"
- "Who can you reach out to when you need support?"
- "Where are you using what you're learning to solve real problems?"

Grades 9-12 (High)

What learners are developing

In high school, learners strengthen self-direction, decision-making, and long-term goal setting. They are also deepening how they collaborate with others, contribute to their communities, and apply their learning to complex, real-world contexts. They are expected to manage increasing independence while preparing for life beyond graduation. Learners refine strategies that align with their values, interests, and future plans, and they learn to advocate for themselves in more complex systems.

What this looks like

- Setting short- and long-term goals
- Applying learning to real-world problems, projects, and decisions
- Making choices connected to interests and future plans
- Reflecting on growth, setbacks, and next steps
- Advocating for support in academic, personal, and postsecondary contexts

How families and caregivers can support

- Encourage learners to reflect on their goals, values, and priorities.
- Support planning for life after high school, including multiple pathways.
- Ask open-ended questions that promote reflection and ownership.
- Gradually shift responsibility to learners while remaining a supportive partner.

Conversation starters

- “What matters most to you right now, and why?”
- “How does this choice connect to your goals?”
- “What support do you need to take your next step?”
- “How are you using what you’re learning beyond school?”

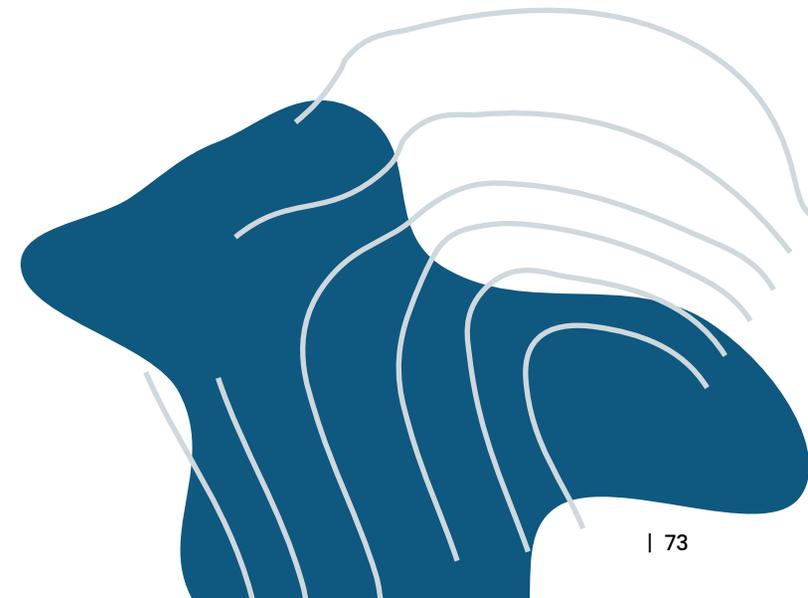
APPENDIX B

The Design Journey and Process

The Portrait-aligned competency and rubric progressions were created through a statewide codesign process involving stakeholders across Nevada. The design process included:

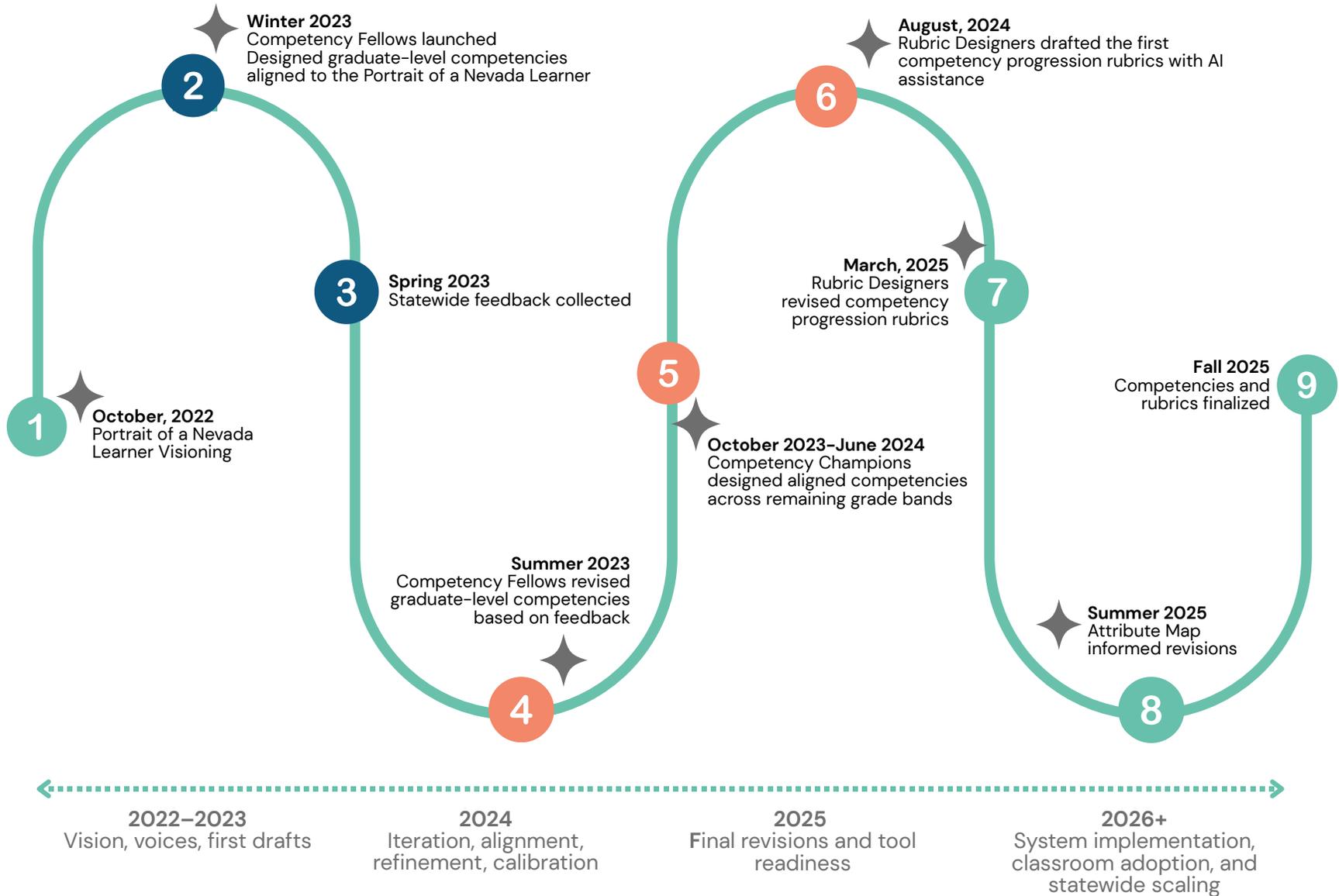
- Co-design with educators across grade levels and regions
- Feedback from stakeholders
- Technical review and revision cycles
- Calibration sessions to ensure consistency and coherence
- Finalizing draft attributes and competencies for each domain
- Generating domain-level competency and rubric progressions, inspired by the foundational draft attributes and competencies
- Alignment to research on whole-learner development
- Creating a usable, instructionally meaningful, student-centered and future ready framework, and companion implementation guide

The progressions reflect diverse perspectives and are grounded in the real needs of Nevada's classrooms and communities.





Portrait, Competency Progression, and Rubric Design Journey



Portrait, Competency Progression, and Rubric Design Journey



1 Fall Statewide Visioning (October, 2022)

Who/What: 200 educators, students, community members, policy-makers gathered to name future-of-learning mindsets/skills.

Outputs: Early portrait themes, public narrative, momentum

How It Set Up Next Phase: Established the domains' focus and "why" of the work, and set up for stakeholder feedback, including youth.

2 Competency Fellows Launched (Winter, 2023)

Who/What: Competency Fellows: PK-12 educators & community leaders, multiple design sessions.

Outputs: Draft attributes and graduate-level competencies grounded in a shared "why" and a structured design approach.

How It Set Up Next Phase: Provided the foundation and frameworks for refining competencies and beginning network growth.

3 Spring Statewide Feedback (May, 2023)

Who/What: Ambassador-led youth, community and educator focus groups, Statewide survey, Nevada Association of School Superintendents (NASS)

Outputs: Feedback

How It Set Up Next Phase: Provided feedback from revisions.

4 Competency Fellows Revisions (June – August 2023)

Who/What: Continuation of Competency Fellows.

Outputs: Revised graduate-level competencies based on Statewide feedback and expanded network connections.

How It Set Up Next Phase: Delivered stronger graduate-level competencies for grade-band alignment and transitioned the work to Competency Champions.

5 Competency Champions (October 2023 – June 2024)

Who/What: Champions were onboarded to design PK-12 competencies.

Outputs: Drafted full competency continua across grade bands and created purpose statements to support toolkit components.

How It Set Up Next Phase: Built complete continua ready for rubric design and seeded the assessment workstream.

6 Summer Rubric Design (August, 2024)

Who/What: Rubric Designers (subgroup of Champions, in-person meeting to draft rubrics).

Outputs: Drafted rubrics aligned to competencies using a design guide, workshops, and AI-supported revisions.

How it Set Up Next Phase: Produced working drafts positioned for piloting, exemplars and further AI refinements.

7 Spring Rubric Revision (March 8, 2025)

Who/What: Rubric Designers (virtual) to revise rubrics.

Outputs: AI-supported rubric revisions.

How It Set Up Next Phase: Rubrics ready to share with a broader audience for feedback.

8 Summer Rubric Polish (2025)

Who/What: KnowledgeWorks, amid federal funding interruptions, polished final rubric revisions.

Outputs: Revised rubrics and competencies with addition of Attribute Map which clarifies domains.

How it Set Up Next Phase: Ensured coherence, clarity and readiness for statewide educator use and/or feedback while continued funding was uncertain.

9 Final Revisions (Fall 2025)

Who/What: Rubric Design Teams

Outputs: Final revisions, original competencies

How It Set Up Next Phase: Established a solid, educator-driven foundation for domain-level competency and rubric design, integrated social-emotional learning, and completed final review and polish. The work is now ready for publication and classroom use.

Portrait of a Nevada Learner



Competency and Rubric Design Process Summary

This framework was developed through an intentional, research-informed, equity-centered design process to ensure that the Portrait of a Nevada Learner is translated into a coherent, rigorous, and developmentally aligned set of competencies and rubrics. The process below outlines the steps, decisions, and quality criteria used to produce a system that is instructionally meaningful, Portrait-aligned, and sustainable statewide.

Establishing Foundations

We began by grounding the work in the Portrait's four domains, EMPOWERING, CONNECTING, IMPACTING, and THRIVING, which define the broad dimensions of whole-learner readiness. This stage included:

- Clarifying domain definitions and boundaries
- Identifying attributes within each domain
- Mapping how domains interact without overlapping
- Crosswalking domains to state social emotional learning standards, durable skills, College and Career Readiness expectations, and principles for student-centered, future-ready learning.

This produced foundational resources for conceptual coherence:

- Domains at a Glance
- Domain Boundary Map
- Attribute Map
- Domain Interaction Summaries

Developing the Original PreK-12 Competency Progressions

Each domain was translated into a nine-attribute-level developmental learning progression across five grade bands:

- **Level 1:** Early Learning (PreK)
- **Level 2:** Primary School (Grades K-2)
- **Level 3:** Elementary School (Grades 3-5)
- **Level 4:** Middle School (Grades 6-8)
- **Level 5:** High School (Grades 9-12)

This phase included:

- Using the Marzano-Kendall Taxonomy to determine cognitive rigor
- Ensuring competencies align with attributes and stay portrait- and domain-aligned
- Writing Educator-Facing versions of each competency
- Conducting cross-domain drift checks

The result was an aligned competency progression for nine attributes across each domain and every grade band.

Transitioning to the Domain-Level Framework

The co-design process initially yielded foundational drafts of competency progressions for nine attributes across the four domains. Due to comprehensive stakeholder feedback, a system-wide refinement was undertaken to more comprehensively address the Portrait and align with social-emotional learning, research-based design, and district needs for crosswalking and implementation.

This transition resulted in a major structural shift to create a more robust framework:

- **Scope:** The focus was simplified from nine attributes to the four domains (EMPOWERING, CONNECTING, IMPACTING, THRIVING), which are now anchored by a total of 16 core attributes (four per domain)
- **Development:** The original co-designed content was leveraged to create new domain-level (rather than attribute-level) competency and rubric progressions
- **Final Outputs:** After the domain-level competencies and rubrics were finalized, the overall framework was completed with structures and guidance for practical implementation and system-wide use

This phase included:

- Reducing the competency progressions from nine to four
- Continuing to use the Marzano-Kendall Taxonomy to determine cognitive rigor
- Calibrating rigor ladders personalized for each domain
- Describing developmental ownership shifts (Co-Regulated → Self-Directed)
- Writing both Educator-Facing and Learner-Facing versions of each competency
- Conducting cross-domain drift checks
- Ensuring that the competencies:
 - Reflect the expanded attributes
 - Maintain alignment with the portrait
 - Embody the inspiration and voice of the original design teams

Inspired by the original design teams and codesigned drafts, and backed by research, the result is a clear, rigorous, and developmentally aligned framework with grade band competency and rubric progressions for each domain.

Embedding Equity, Cultural Responsiveness, and Accessibility

Equity is not a section. It is a design principle. All domains include:

- Notes on equity, neurodiversity, linguistic diversity, and cultural expression
- Cautions against biased interpretation of behavior
- Recognition of multiple valid modes of communication and demonstration

This ensures use remains fair, inclusive, and culturally responsive.

Defining Learning Design Supports and Evidence Pathways

Each rubric includes an educator-facing mirror in the companion implementation guide:

- Learning Design Progression
- Ownership Shifts
- Instructional Scaffolds
- Evidence Examples
- Assessment Pathways

These components ensure that rubrics are instructional tools, not evaluation tools.

Designing Rubric Learning Progressions

Each competency anchors a full rubric progression (Emerging → Extending Competence). A disciplined, research-based process was followed:

A. Start with Proficient (Anchor Level)

- Interpret the mental process + complexity with the Marzano-Kendall Taxonomy
- Identify observable learner behaviors
- Write measurable, domain-pure indicators
- Ensure alignment with the grade-band competency

B. Build Emerging and Developing Using Scaffolding Logic

- Not “watered-down Proficient”
- Building blocks supporting the path to proficiency
- Earlier ownership and cognitive levels
- Observable, asset-based, and growth-oriented behaviors

C. Build Extending Competence Using Three Pillars

1. Autonomy
2. Transfer (authentic / cross-context)
3. Metacognition

Proficient is the developmental anchor. Extending Competence is enrichment with increasing depth and a healthy stretch within the same grade band, rather than a prerequisite for moving to the next level. Each rubric progression is a staircase, not a ceiling. Extending demonstrates deeper, more independent application before moving to the next level.

D. Apply the Rubric for Quality Rubric Design

Each rubric was checked for:

- Observability
- Measurability
- Domain drift
- Cognitive coherence
- Overlap or gaps across levels
- Inclusive, asset-based language

Ensuring Vertical and Horizontal Coherence

Repeated cross-domain and cross-level checks were conducted:

- Competency → Rubric alignment
- Attribute → Domain alignment
- K-2 → 3-5 → 6-8 → 9-12 developmental coherence
- Maintenance of domain boundaries
- Appropriate cognitive rigor increases
- No circularity or redundancy

This prevents drift, redundancy, or misalignment across the system.

Creating a Usable, Instructionally Meaningful System

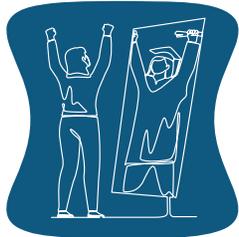
The final framework is structured for practical use:

- Domain Introductions
- Domains at a Glance
- Attribute Maps
- Competency Progressions (Educator + Learner Facing)
- Rubric Progressions (Emerging → Extending)
- Bridges Between Levels
- Appendices (Family and Systems Implementation Guidance, The Design Process and Journey, Domain Summaries, Attribute Maps, Social-emotional Learning Integration Alignment, Research and Technical Notes)
- A Companion Implementation Guide

This ensures the Portrait is not simply a vision—it becomes an everyday instructional tool.

APPENDIX C

Domain Summaries



EMPOWERING

How will I grow in my learning?

Students understand themselves as learners and use strategies, reflection, and advocacy as they grow.

Why EMPOWERING Matters

EMPOWERING prepares students to:

- Understand themselves as learners
- Take initiative in their learning
- Persist when tasks are unfamiliar or challenging
- Adapt strategically as demands change
- Advocate for what they need to learn well
- Make purposeful, values-aligned decisions
- Succeed in postsecondary learning, work, and community life

EMPOWERING is the core driver of learner agency and academic confidence.

What the EMPOWERING Domain Develops

The EMPOWERING domain supports learners in understanding and managing their learning processes and advocating for what they need to grow. Across PreK–12, learners develop awareness of their strengths, needs, emotions, and habits, use strategies to stay engaged and motivated, reflect on their learning experiences, and take increasing ownership of decisions that affect their growth.

EMPOWERING is the foundation of learner agency. It enables students to engage intentionally with learning, persist through challenge, adapt as expectations change, and make purposeful choices that support success in learning.

EMPOWERING integrates four attributes:

Self-Awareness and Identity as a Learner

Recognizing strengths, needs, interests and learning preferences, and understanding how these influence learning.

Self-Management and Strategic Action

Using strategies, habits, and routines to stay focused, motivated, organized, and engaged across learning contexts.

Reflection and Goal-Directed Growth

Reflecting on experiences, feedback, and progress to set goals, adjust approaches, and guide continuous improvement.

Self-Advocacy and Ownership

Expressing needs, seeking support or challenge, making informed choices, and taking responsibility for learning decisions.

Together, these attributes help learners build confidence, agency, and readiness to navigate increasingly complex learning demands.

How EMPOWERING Grows from PreK to Graduation

LEVEL 1: PreK

Learners express basic feelings, needs, and reactions and try simple, modeled strategies with support as they participate in early learning routines. They begin developing awareness of themselves as learners.

LEVEL 2: K-2

Learners describe their strengths, needs, and learning habits and use familiar strategies with reminders to stay engaged. They begin setting simple goals and asking for help when needed.

LEVEL 3: Grades 3-5

Learners reflect on what helps them learn, use strategies independently, and take responsibility for parts of their learning. They set goals, respond to feedback, and begin advocating for support or challenge.

LEVEL 4: Grades 6-8

Learners monitor their progress, adapt strategies across contexts, and make purposeful choices about their learning. They reflect on feedback, manage increasing demands, and advocate effectively in new situations.

LEVEL 5: Grades 9-12

Learners evaluate their learning habits, goals, and strategies and take ownership of their growth in complex or changing contexts. They advocate with confidence, and prepare for postsecondary learning, work, and community life.

What This Looks Like When Students Are Growing

Across PreK-12, learners progressively:

- Recognize and describe their strengths and needs as learners
- Use strategies to stay engaged, focused, and motivated
- Reflect on experiences and feedback to guide improvement
- Set goals and monitor progress over time
- Persist when learning feels unfamiliar or challenging
- Adapt strategies as expectations or contexts change
- Advocate for support, resources, or challenge
- Take increasing ownership of learning decisions

EMPOWERING supports learners in becoming confident, self-directed, and purposeful in their learning journeys.

How Educators Support EMPOWERING

Across grade bands, educators:

- Model reflection, goal-setting, and strategic learning behaviors
- Provide explicit instruction and practice with learning strategies
- Scaffold self-awareness, goal-setting, and reflection routines
- Offer feedback that builds confidence and clarity about next steps
- Create structures for choice, ownership, and learner voice
- Support help-seeking, advocacy, and productive risk-taking
- Gradually release responsibility as learners build independence

Educator support evolves from modeling and co-regulating learning → guiding reflection and strategy use → mentoring learners in ownership, advocacy, and self-direction.



CONNECTING

How do I build and sustain relationships and community? Learners develop empathy, communicate clearly, collaborate with others, and support belonging.

Why CONNECTING Matters

CONNECTING prepares students to:

- Build positive relationships
- Collaborate effectively
- Communicate ideas clearly
- Understand diverse perspectives
- Strengthen learning communities
- Navigate social challenges
- Contribute meaningfully to their world

CONNECTING is a core element of future-ready learning and human-centered education.

What the CONNECTING Domain Develops

The CONNECTING domain supports learners in building strong relationships, contributing to community, and communicating with empathy, clarity, and purpose. Across PreK-12, learners grow from noticing simple feelings and sharing early ideas to facilitating communication, navigating multiple perspectives, and strengthening belonging and trust in complex situations.

CONNECTING integrates four attributes:

Empathy and Perspective-Taking

Understanding the feelings, experiences, and viewpoints of others.

Communication and Expression

Sharing ideas clearly, adapting communication for purpose and audience, and listening actively.

Collaboration and Teamwork

Working toward shared goals, supporting group processes, and participating in routines and tasks that require interdependence.

Community-Building and Belonging

Including others, supporting positive interactions, and strengthening learning communities through trust and shared purpose.

Together, these capacities help learners connect with others, contribute to groups, and engage as thoughtful members of classroom and community.

How CONNECTING Grows from PreK to Graduation

LEVEL 1: PreK

Learners notice simple feelings and communication cues and share ideas with support as they participate in early learning routines. They begin building empathy and foundational communication skills through modeling and shared activities.

LEVEL 2: K-2

Learners describe how classmates feel, share ideas clearly, and use simple collaboration routines with reminders as they build relationships in familiar learning situations. Early teamwork and perspective-taking emerge through predictable routines.

LEVEL 3: Grades 3-5

Learners understand others' ideas and feelings, use communication strategies independently, and contribute to group tasks as they help their learning community work well together. They develop deeper empathy and more effective collaboration skills.

LEVEL 4: Grades 6-8

Learners adapt their communication, understand multiple perspectives, and support group processes as they collaborate across different learning contexts and help others feel included. They begin taking leadership roles in group functioning and inclusive practices.

LEVEL 5: Grades 9-12

Learners facilitate communication, navigate diverse viewpoints, and contribute to belonging and trust as they strengthen relationships and learning communities in new and complex situations. They take initiative to build connection, resolve misunderstandings, and support positive community dynamics.

What This Looks Like When Students Are Growing

Across PreK-12, learners progressively:

- Notice and interpret social cues
- Express ideas clearly for different purposes and audiences
- Demonstrate empathy and respond to others' feelings
- Help groups stay focused, organized, and inclusive
- Communicate in ways that support belonging and collaboration
- Navigate misunderstandings and differences in perspective
- Take initiative to facilitate trust, clarity, and connection
- Build strong learning communities across diverse contexts

CONNECTING equips students to communicate effectively, collaborate productively, and build inclusive communities.

How Educators Support CONNECTING

Across grade bands, educators:

- Model turn-taking, listening, and respectful communication
- Provide guided practice with collaboration routines
- Scaffold perspective-taking and empathy-building
- Teach and model group norms and inclusive practices
- Provide varied opportunities for independent teamwork
- Support conflict prevention and resolution
- Create learning environments where all voices are valued
- Encourage leadership roles in communication and collaboration

Educators evolve from modeling and supporting interactions → facilitating inclusive collaboration → mentoring learners in leadership and community-building.



IMPACTING

How will I contribute to make an impact? Learners develop empathy, communicate clearly, collaborate with others, and support belonging.

Why IMPACTING Matters

IMPACTING prepares students to:

- Think critically and responsibly
- Interpret information across contexts
- Make evidence-informed decisions
- Take action to improve ideas and systems
- Engage thoughtfully in civic and community life
- Contribute to meaningful change in their world

IMPACTING is a foundational domain for responsible citizenship, innovation, and future-ready learning.

What the IMPACTING Domain Develops

The IMPACTING domain supports learners in understanding ideas, analyzing information, applying their learning, and taking informed action to improve ideas, outcomes, and systems. Learners use evidence and reasoning to make sense of problems, evaluate options, consider consequences, and contribute thoughtfully to their classroom, school, and community.

IMPACTING integrates four attributes:

Reasoning and Critical Thinking

Evaluating information, comparing ideas, analyzing claims, and using evidence and criteria to understand issues and draw informed conclusions.

Knowledge Application and Transfer

Applying learning across tasks, subjects, and contexts to interpret problems, make sense of new information, and design solutions.

Solutions-Oriented Thinking and Decision Making

Identifying problems, generating and evaluating options, considering implications, and choosing responsible, evidence-informed actions.

Contribution and Civic Engagement

Participating in inquiry, dialogue, and informed action that improves the classroom, school, or community, engaging ethically in civic issues and collaborative problem-solving.

Together, these attributes prepare learners to engage thoughtfully with ideas and issues, make informed decisions, and take purposeful action in meaningful contexts.

How IMPACTING Grows from PreK to Graduation

LEVEL 1: PreK

Learners show what they notice about ideas or problems and share simple ideas about what could happen next as they explore through play and simple tasks.

LEVEL 2: K-2

Learners describe ideas or problems and use familiar examples or observations to make sense of situations in familiar contexts.

LEVEL 3: Grades 3-5

Learners compare ideas, notice patterns, and use simple reasons or evidence to explore problems and possibilities.

LEVEL 4: Grades 6-8

Learners analyze problems, use evidence to evaluate ideas or approaches, and refine solutions as they act on their learning across different contexts.

LEVEL 5: Grades 9-12

Learners evaluate information, consider implications and consequences, and take informed, purposeful action that contributes positively to improving ideas, outcomes, or systems in complex situations.

What This Looks Like When Students Are Growing

Across PreK-12, learners progressively:

- Notice and describe ideas or problems
- Use examples, observations, reasons, and evidence
- Compare ideas and identify patterns
- Evaluate ideas and refine solutions
- Consider implications, consequences, and perspectives
- Generate and choose solutions with purpose
- Apply learning in varied and new contexts
- Take informed, ethical action that contributes to community

This growth reflects a Portrait learner who is thoughtful, analytical, responsible, and engaged in improving their world.

How Educators Support IMPACTING

Across grade bands, educators:

- Model inquiry, reasoning, and evidence use
- Provide opportunities for students to explore ideas and problems
- Scaffold comparison, pattern noticing, and analysis
- Teach criteria for evaluating ideas and solutions
- Provide interdisciplinary tasks and real-world problems
- Facilitate decision-making and reflection on implications
- Create opportunities for civic contribution and community-engaged action

Educators evolve from modeling and guiding exploration → supporting analysis and evaluation → facilitating informed, meaningful action.



THRIVING

How will I thrive? Learners grow in emotional awareness, adaptability, resilience, and values-aligned decision-making.

Why THRIVING Matters

THRIVING prepares students to:

- Understand themselves deeply
- Stay centered during difficulty
- Adapt when situations change
- Make values-aligned decisions
- Maintain long-term motivation and well-being
- Navigate uncertainty with confidence
- Act with integrity and purpose in learning and life

THRIVING is a foundational domain for responsible citizenship, innovation, and future-ready learning.

What the THRIVING Domain Develops

The THRIVING domain supports learners in understanding and sustaining their well-being, navigating challenges, adapting across contexts, and making choices aligned with their values and long-term purpose. Learners build emotional awareness, persistence, flexibility, and integrity as they encounter the predictable and unpredictable aspects of learning and life. They learn to recognize how internal states influence behavior, use strategies to recover or re-engage, adjust habits or routines, and act in ways that promote balance, resilience, and purpose.

THRIVING integrates four attributes:

Emotional Awareness, Well-Being, and Balance

Recognizing and understanding feelings, needs, and habits; noticing stressors or imbalance; and, maintaining well-being and readiness for learning across situations.

Adaptability and Flexibility

Adjusting approaches, routines, behaviors, or mindsets to respond to change, navigate uncertainty, and remain steady when situations become unfamiliar or challenging.

Resilience, Recovery, and Persistence

Responding constructively to challenges, using strategies to recover or re-engage, persisting when something feels hard, and continuing progress even after setbacks.

Purpose, Integrity, and Values-Aligned Choices

Making decisions that reflect personal values and goals, acting with honesty, responsibility and purpose, and sustaining motivation and well-being across complex or changing situations.

How THRIVING Grows from PreK to Graduation

LEVEL 1: PreK

Learners show feelings, needs, and reactions and try simple strategies with support as they respond to challenges during learning and play. They develop early emotional awareness and readiness to re-engage after difficulty.

LEVEL 2: K-2

Learners describe their feelings, needs, and reactions and use familiar strategies with reminders to stay engaged or try again when something feels hard. They begin noticing what helps them maintain balance.

LEVEL 3: Grades 3-5

Learners notice patterns in what supports their calm, balance or focus, and adjust their approach as they navigate challenges. They build habits that support steady engagement and well-being in familiar contexts.

LEVEL 4: Grades 6-8

Learners reflect on feelings, needs, habits and routines, and adapt their approach across different contexts to manage challenges. They make choices aligned with well-being and emerging personal values and goals.

LEVEL 5: Grades 9-12

Learners evaluate their feelings, needs, habits and responses, and act with integrity and purpose as they navigate complex or changing situations. They sustain well-being practices and make values-aligned choices across varied or unpredictable contexts.

What This Looks Like When Students Are Growing

Across PreK-12, learners progressively:

- Recognize and describe feelings, needs, and internal states
- Recover and re-engage when something feels hard
- Persist through challenges
- Notice what helps them stay balanced and focused
- Adjust habits or routines when something changes
- Navigate uncertainty with flexibility and steadiness
- Make choices aligned with personal values and goals
- Act with integrity and purpose in complex contexts

THRIVING helps learners build lifelong habits of well-being, adaptability, and purpose-driven resilience.

How Educators Support THRIVING

Educators foster THRIVING by:

- Modeling emotional awareness and grounding strategies
- Providing predictable routines and supportive environments
- Guiding reflection on feelings, needs, stressors, and habits
- Teaching recovery and re-engagement strategies
- Offering opportunities to practice flexibility across contexts
- Supporting values-aligned decision-making
- Encouraging leadership in well-being and purpose-driven action

Educators' support evolves from co-regulating and modeling strategies → guiding reflection → supporting independent, purposeful adaptation.

APPENDIX D

Learner-Facing Competencies at a Glance

Developmentally appropriate expected growth in rigor and independence from PreK through graduation. These learner-facing competency statements describe how learners answer the guiding question across grade bands.

EMPOWERING Domain Competency Progression

How will I grow in my learning?

Level 1 Early Learning PreK	Level 2 Primary School Grades K-2	Level 3 Elementary School Grades 3-5	Level 4 Middle School Grades 6-8	Level 5 High School Grades 9-12
I show my feelings, needs, and reactions, and try simple, modeled strategies with help as I get ready and stay engaged in my learning.	I describe my strengths, needs, feelings and habits, and use familiar strategies with reminders as I stay ready, focused, and engaged in my learning.	I notice patterns in my strengths, needs, feelings and habits, and use strategies independently as I stay ready, focused, and organized in my learning.	I reflect on my strengths, needs, feelings and habits, and choose, adapt, and evaluate strategies as I stay focused, organized, and engaged across different learning contexts.	I evaluate my strengths, needs, feelings, habits and strategies, and adapt with purpose as I direct my learning across new, complex, or changing situations.

CONNECTING Domain Competency Progression

How do I build and sustain relationships and community?

Level 1 Early Learning PreK	Level 2 Primary School Grades K-2	Level 3 Elementary School Grades 3-5	Level 4 Middle School Grades 6-8	Level 5 High School Grades 9-12
I notice simple feelings and communication cues and share my ideas with support during play and group routines.	I describe how classmates feel or what they share and choose simple ways to communicate in familiar learning situations.	I compare ideas and viewpoints, notice patterns of effective collaboration, and use communication strategies independently so everyone feels heard, included, and able to participate.	I decide how to communicate with different audiences, adapt my message in person and online, and consider how my communication choices support empathy, collaboration, and belonging across contexts.	I plan communication approaches for diverse audiences and contexts, justify my choices of tools, norms, formats and styles, and prioritize dialogue that strengthens trust, inclusion, and belonging across communities.

IMPACTING Domain Competency Progression

How do I contribute to make an impact?

Level 1 Early Learning PreK	Level 2 Primary School Grades K-2	Level 3 Elementary School Grades 3-5	Level 4 Middle School Grades 6-8	Level 5 High School Grades 9-12
I show what I notice about ideas or problems with help as I explore and learn through simple tasks or play.	I describe simple ideas or problems and use familiar examples or observations as I make sense of my learning in familiar situations.	I compare ideas, notice patterns, and use reasons or simple evidence as I explore problems and possibilities in my learning.	I analyze issues, evaluate ideas or solution options using evidence and criteria, and refine solutions as I take informed action with others across different learning contexts.	I evaluate evidence, perspectives, and consequences, and design evidence-informed solutions as I take purposeful action to improve ideas, outcomes, or systems in complex or civic community contexts.

THRIVING Domain Competency Progression

How will I thrive?

Level 1 Early Learning PreK	Level 2 Primary School Grades K-2	Level 3 Elementary School Grades 3-5	Level 4 Middle School Grades 6-8	Level 5 High School Grades 9-12
I notice my feelings and needs, use simple strategies with help, and try again when something feels hard during activities or play.	I describe my feelings and needs, use familiar strategies with reminders, and begin adjusting what I do so I can stay steady, balanced, and ready to engage.	I notice patterns in what supports my well-being, use strategies independently, and adjust my approach when something feels difficult so I can recover and re-engage.	I evaluate what affects my well-being, adapt my strategies across classes and situations, and navigate challenges or change with growing independence, purpose, and flexibility.	I evaluate my habits, choices, and well-being across contexts, align my actions with my values, and navigate challenges with integrity, resilience, and purpose in school, work, and life.

APPENDIX E

Domain Rubrics at a Glance

EMPOWERING How will I grow in my learning?

EMPOWERING	Emerging	Developing	Proficient (Anchor)	Extending Competence
<p>Level 1 I show my feelings, needs, and reactions, and try simple, modelled strategies with help as I get ready and stay engaged in my learning.</p>	<p>I show simple feelings or needs, try a simple strategy when someone helps me start it, and join learning or play with help.</p>	<p>I name simple feelings or needs, use a simple strategy, and take part in familiar learning or play routines with reminders.</p>	<p>I notice or show my feelings and needs, use simple strategies with help, and take part in familiar routines independently.</p>	<p>I describe what helps me in new or changing routines, choose simple strategies that help me get ready, and take part in learning or play on my own.</p>
<p>Level 2 I describe my strengths, needs, feelings, and habits, and use familiar strategies with reminders to stay ready, focused, and engaged in my learning.</p>	<p>I name simple strengths or needs as a learner, use a familiar strategy when someone starts it, and take part in familiar learning activities with help.</p>	<p>I describe simple strengths or needs as a learner, choose familiar strategies when prompted, and adjust small actions in familiar learning activities with reminders.</p>	<p>I describe my strengths and needs as a learner, choose familiar strategies with reminders, and adjust what I do in familiar learning activities.</p>	<p>I recognize what helps me as a learner in new or changing learning activities, choose familiar strategies on my own, and adjust what I do to stay engaged in learning.</p>
<p>Level 3 I notice patterns in my strengths, needs, feelings, and habits, and use strategies independently as I stay ready, focused, and organized in my learning.</p>	<p>I identify simple things that help me learn in familiar tasks, use strategies I know when someone prompts me, and explain what I noticed with help.</p>	<p>I notice simple patterns in what helps me learn in familiar subjects, choose and use strategies with reminders, and explain basic reasons for my choices.</p>	<p>I notice patterns in my strengths, needs, feelings, and learning habits, use strategies independently across subjects, and explain what helps me stay focused and organized.</p>	<p>I identify patterns that help me learn in new or changing learning situations, choose, and adapt strategies on my own, and explain why my choices support my learning across tasks.</p>
<p>Level 4 I reflect on my strengths, needs, feelings, and habits, and choose, adapt, and evaluate strategies as I stay focused, organized, and engaged across different learning contexts.</p>	<p>I identify habits that affect my learning in familiar classes, use strategies someone suggests, and adjust what I do with help when a task becomes challenging.</p>	<p>I describe habits that affect my learning in familiar classes, choose, and adjust strategies with reminders, and explain simple reasons for my choices.</p>	<p>I reflect on my learning habits, plan and adjust strategies across classes, and advocate for what I need with growing independence.</p>	<p>I evaluate how my learning habits affect my progress across different contexts, plan and adapt strategies on my own for new or complex tasks, and explain how my choices support my learning.</p>
<p>Level 5 I evaluate my strengths, needs, feelings, habits, and strategies, and adapt with purpose as I direct my learning across new, complex or changing situations.</p>	<p>I describe my learning habits in familiar classes, choose strategies someone suggests, and adjust what I do when a task becomes challenging with support.</p>	<p>I analyze how my learning habits influence my progress in familiar contexts, choose and adapt strategies with reminders, and explain why my choices support my learning.</p>	<p>I evaluate my learning habits across contexts, plan and adapt strategies for complex tasks, and direct my learning using intentional choices.</p>	<p>I evaluate how my learning habits shape my approach in new or complex situations, plan and refine strategies on my own, and explain how my decisions align with my learning goals.</p>

CONNECTING How will I grow in my learning?

CONNECTING	Emerging	Developing	Proficient (Anchor)	Extending Competence
<p>Level 1 I notice simple feelings and communication cues, and share my ideas with support during play and group routines.</p>	<p>I notice simple feelings or cues, share my ideas with help using gestures or a few words, and join play or group routines with support.</p>	<p>I notice simple feelings or cues in familiar routines, use simple words, pictures, or gestures when prompted, and share my ideas during play or group routines with reminders.</p>	<p>I notice simple feelings and communication cues, share my ideas in ways others can understand and take turns or respond independently during play or group routines.</p>	<p>I notice simple cues or feelings in new or changing routines, share my ideas in different ways on my own, and help others take part in play or group activities.</p>
<p>Level 2 I describe how classmates feel or what they share and choose simple ways to communicate in familiar learning situations.</p>	<p>I describe simple ideas or feelings when someone helps me, choose simple ways to share with help, and take part in familiar routines with support.</p>	<p>I describe how classmates feel or what they share in familiar routines, choose simple ways to communicate with reminders, and take turns or respond during group activities with reminders.</p>	<p>I describe how classmates feel or what they share, choose simple ways to communicate independently, and take part in familiar group activities in ways that support others.</p>	<p>I notice how classmates feel and what they need in new or changing routines, and I choose simple ways to communicate on my own and help others take part in familiar or new group activities.</p>
<p>Level 3 I compare ideas and viewpoints, notice patterns of effective collaboration, and use communication strategies independently so everyone feels heard, included, and able to participate.</p>	<p>I recognize ideas, viewpoints, and communication cues during supported group interactions and follow basic in-person or digital norms with prompting.</p>	<p>I explain different ideas and viewpoints while collaborating, retell what helps classmates participate, and use communication norms and tools with guidance to support shared understanding.</p>	<p>I compare ideas and viewpoints, notice patterns of effective collaboration and use communication strategies independently so everyone feels heard, included, and able to participate.</p>	<p>I select and adapt communication approaches to support group collaboration, use communication tools thoughtfully across tasks or settings, and reflect on how my choices influence participation, inclusion, and group success.</p>
<p>Level 4 I decide how to communicate with different audiences, adapt my message in person and online, and consider how my communication choices support empathy, collaboration, and belonging across contexts.</p>	<p>I describe communication expectations in familiar situations, explain simple differences in how messages may be understood, and follow modeled strategies for listening, sharing, and showing empathy during in-person or online interactions.</p>	<p>I examine communication needs in group tasks, compare options for wording or tone with guidance, and use communication norms to support empathy, understanding, and cooperation.</p>	<p>I apply communication strategies intentionally based on audience and situation, adapt messages across in-person and digital settings, and monitor how my choices support empathy, collaboration, belonging, and constructive conflict navigation.</p>	<p>I evaluate communication approaches across varied settings, anticipate how peers may interpret messages, and adjust strategies independently to strengthen empathy, inclusion, collaboration, and healthy conflict resolution.</p>
<p>Level 5 I plan communication approaches for diverse audiences and contexts, justify my choices of tools, norms, formats and styles, and prioritize dialogue that strengthens trust, inclusion, and belonging across communities.</p>	<p>I analyze communication needs by comparing audiences, perspectives, and contexts, select familiar tools or formats with guidance, and use communication norms to support inclusive and meaningful interaction.</p>	<p>I apply communication strategies purposefully, adapt tools and formats with guidance, and use communication norms to support empathy, understanding, and constructive dialogue.</p>	<p>I evaluate communication approaches for purpose, audience, culture, and context, select and justify tools, formats, and norms for in-person and digital communication, and use these choices to build trust, inclusion, and meaningful dialogue across communities.</p>	<p>I prioritize communication approaches independently across varied community and digital settings, anticipate complex audience needs, revise strategies based on relational impact, and model communication that strengthens trust, belonging, and inclusive dialogue.</p>

IMPACTING How will I contribute to make an impact?

IMPACTING	Emerging	Developing	Proficient (Anchor)	Extending Competence
<p>Level 1 I show what I notice about ideas or problems with help as I explore and learn through simple tasks or play.</p>	<p>I notice or show simple ideas or changes during play, explore materials with help, and share what I saw in simple ways.</p>	<p>I notice what happens during simple tasks or play, show or say what I noticed when prompted, and explore ideas or materials with reminders.</p>	<p>I show what I notice about simple ideas or problems during play or learning and explore tasks or materials independently.</p>	<p>I notice simple ideas or problems in new or changing situations, show what I discovered in different ways, and explore tasks or materials on my own.</p>
<p>Level 2 I describe simple ideas or problems and use familiar examples or observations as I make sense of my learning in familiar situations.</p>	<p>I describe simple ideas or problems with help, use familiar examples when prompted and make sense of simple tasks with support.</p>	<p>I describe simple ideas or problems in familiar situations, use familiar examples or observations with reminders, and make sense of simple tasks by sharing what I noticed.</p>	<p>I describe simple ideas or problems and use familiar examples or observations as I make sense of my learning in familiar situations.</p>	<p>I describe simple ideas or problems in new or changing situations, use familiar examples or observations on my own, and share early ideas for what we could try next.</p>
<p>Level 3 I compare ideas, notice patterns, and use reasons or simple evidence as I explore problems and possibilities in my learning.</p>	<p>I notice simple ideas or changes in familiar tasks, share what I noticed with help, and explore problems or materials when someone guides me.</p>	<p>I compare simple ideas in familiar situations, describe patterns I notice with guidance, and share reasons for my thinking in basic ways.</p>	<p>I compare ideas, notice patterns, and use reasons or simple evidence as I explore problems and possibilities in my learning.</p>	<p>I compare ideas and patterns in new or changing situations, use reasons or simple evidence on my own, and suggest possible next steps or solutions during exploration.</p>
<p>Level 4 I analyze issues, evaluate ideas or solution options using evidence and criteria, and refine solutions as I take informed action with others across different learning contexts.</p>	<p>I identify information or ideas in familiar issues, describe simple differences between options with help, and explore solutions when someone guides me.</p>	<p>I analyze information in familiar issues, compare ideas or options with reminders, and use simple evidence to explain my thinking during guided decisions.</p>	<p>I analyze issues, evaluate ideas or solution options using evidence and criteria, and refine solutions as I take informed action with others across different learning contexts.</p>	<p>I evaluate ideas or solution options in new or changing situations, use evidence or criteria on my own, and refine solutions as I take informed action during more complex tasks.</p>
<p>Level 5 I evaluate evidence, perspectives, and consequences, and design evidence-informed solutions as I take purposeful action to improve ideas, outcomes, or systems in complex or civic community contexts.</p>	<p>I analyze information about familiar issues, describe simple relationships between ideas with support, and take part in guided actions during class or school tasks.</p>	<p>I examine evidence and perspectives in familiar situations, compare options and potential consequences with reminders, and contribute to guided actions that support class or school tasks.</p>	<p>I evaluate evidence, perspectives, and consequences, and design evidence-informed solutions as I take purposeful action to improve ideas, outcomes or systems in complex or civic community contexts.</p>	<p>I evaluate complex or conflicting evidence, perspectives, and consequences in new or changing situations, design, and refine solutions on my own, and take purposeful action that strengthens outcomes or systems in civic or community settings.</p>

THRIVING How will I thrive?

THRIVING	Emerging	Developing	Proficient (Anchor)	Extending Competence
<p>Level 1 I notice my feelings and needs, use simple strategies with help, and try again when something feels hard during activities or play.</p>	<p>I show simple feelings or needs, use a simple strategy when someone helps me start it, and try again with support when activities or play feel hard.</p>	<p>I name simple feelings or needs with reminders, use a familiar strategy with guidance, and try again during activities or play when something feels hard.</p>	<p>I notice my feelings and needs, use simple strategies with help, and try again when something feels hard during activities and play.</p>	<p>I notice my feelings and needs in new or changing routines, choose familiar strategies with less help, and try again on my own when activities or play feel hard.</p>
<p>Level 2 I describe my feelings and needs, use familiar strategies with reminders, and begin adjusting what I do so I can stay steady, balanced, and ready to engage.</p>	<p>I show or name simple feelings or needs with help, use a familiar strategy when someone starts it, and keep trying during activities or play with support when something feels hard.</p>	<p>I describe simple feelings or needs with reminders, use familiar strategies with guidance, and adjust small actions during activities or play when something feels hard.</p>	<p>I describe my feelings and needs, use familiar strategies with reminders, and begin adjusting what I do so I can stay steady, balanced, and ready to engage.</p>	<p>I describe my feelings and needs in new or changing routines, choose familiar strategies with fewer reminders, and adjust what I do on my own so I can stay steady and balanced during activities or play.</p>
<p>Level 3 I notice patterns in what supports my well-being, use strategies independently, and adjust my approach when something feels difficult so I can recover and re-engage.</p>	<p>I notice what helps me feel steady in familiar tasks, use simple strategies when someone prompts me, and try again with support when something feels difficult.</p>	<p>I notice what helps me feel steady in familiar tasks, use familiar strategies on my own in simple situations, and adjust small actions with reminders when something feels difficult.</p>	<p>I notice patterns in what supports my well-being, use strategies independently, and adjust my approach when something feels difficult so I can recover and re-engage.</p>	<p>I notice patterns in what supports my well-being in new or changing situations, choose and adapt strategies on my own, and adjust my approach in different contexts so I can recover and re-engage.</p>
<p>Level 4 I evaluate what affects my well-being, adapt my strategies across classes and situations, and navigate challenges or change with growing independence, purpose, and flexibility.</p>	<p>I recognize some feelings, habits, or situations that affect my well-being with help, use familiar strategies when someone suggests them, and try to adjust my approach with guidance when challenges or changes happen.</p>	<p>I describe how some habits, feelings or situations affect my well-being in familiar routines, choose familiar strategies with reminders, and adjust what I do during challenges or changes with guidance.</p>	<p>I evaluate what affects my well-being, adapt my strategies across classes and situations, and navigate challenges or change with growing independence, purpose, and flexibility.</p>	<p>I evaluate what affects my well-being in new or changing situations, choose, and refine strategies on my own, and navigate challenges or change with increasing confidence and purpose across different contexts.</p>
<p>Level 5 I evaluate my habits, choices and well-being across contexts, align my actions with my values, and navigate challenges with integrity, resilience, and purpose in school, work, and life.</p>	<p>I describe my feelings, habits, or choices in familiar situations with help, use familiar strategies when someone suggests them, and try to adjust what I do when challenges happen with support.</p>	<p>I analyze how my habits, choices, or situations affect my well-being in familiar contexts, choose familiar strategies with reminders, and adjust what I do during challenges or changes with guidance.</p>	<p>I evaluate my habits, choices, and well-being across contexts, align my actions with my values, and navigate challenges with integrity, resilience, and purpose in school, work, and life.</p>	<p>I evaluate habits, choices, and well-being in new or complex situations, choose and refine strategies on my own, and navigate challenges or change with increasing confidence, resilience, and purpose across different contexts.</p>

