

**DYNAMIC**<sup>®</sup>  
LEARNING MAPS

# ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR MANUAL 2023–2024

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**ELA, MATH, AND SCIENCE**

**Publication Date: 06/30/2023**

**Version YE**

All screenshots, data dictionaries, and templates shown or referred to in this manual are accurate on the Publication Date noted above.

When this manual is updated, the Revision Date will also be updated. A summary of changes is included in the Appendix under Document History.

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## FINDING HELP

When the information in this manual and resources from your state Dynamic Learning Maps® (DLM®) webpage do not lead to solutions, the contacts in Table 1 can provide additional support.

HINT: Print this page and keep it handy!

**Table 1**

### *Where to Find Help*

<b>Local Technology Representative</b>	<b>State Education Agency</b>	<b>The DLM Service Desk* 1-855-277-9751 (toll-free) or DLM-support@ku.edu</b>
Kite® Student Portal and Educator Portal installation General computer support Internet availability Display resolution Issues with sound, headphones, speakers, etc.	How to use Student Portal and Educator Portal Training requirements Assessment questions Assessment scheduling Test invalidation requirements Student Individualized Education Program (IEP) requirements Test window dates, extensions, requirements, etc. Testlet resets (may take up to five business days)	Data issues (rosters, enrollment, etc.) Unlocking Student Portal

#### ***\*When contacting the DLM Service Desk:***

- **Do not send any Personally Identifiable Information (PII)** for a student via email or Educator Portal Live Chat. This is a federal violation of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). PII includes information such as a student’s name or state identification number. Each state has unique PII requirements. Check with your assessment coordinator to find out what student information can be legally emailed or submitted using Live Chat.

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NOTE: All information in an email is taken into consideration when checking for PII violations. The electronic signature for the sender of an email may identify

the district or school in which a student resides. This information, combined with other student identifying information, may constitute a PII violation for your state.

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- **Do send:**
  - Your contact information (email address and name)
  - Your school name and district, if your state permits these in an email or chat that also contains student information
  - Error messages, including the testlet number if applicable to the problem
  - The Service Desk ticket number when following up on a previously submitted issue

# ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR MANUAL

## 2023–2024

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## AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE

The ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR MANUAL for the Dynamic Learning Maps® (DLM®) alternate assessment provides assessment coordinators with information to support data managers, technology personnel, and test administrators (e.g., educators, examiners, or teachers) in preparing for the assessment. Assessment coordinators oversee the assessment process and serve as the main point of contact between the following:

- State assessment administrator
- Regional coordinators in states that have regions
- DLM Service Desk agents
- District and building educators

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

To learn about updates to assessment coordinator resources such as this manual, subscribe to [Test Updates](#) on the DLM website.

## WHAT'S NEW IN THIS VERSION

Information about these topics has been added or enhanced in this version (Table 2).

**Table 2**

*What's New*

Topic	Starting Page
Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in an email or chat	2
Proctor role no longer available in Educator Portal for DLM alternate assessments	11
First Contact Survey	26

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## INTRODUCTION

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This manual provides information to assist the assessment coordinator in supporting district staff and educators participating in Dynamic Learning Maps® (DLM®) assessment. This manual also includes a checklist, DLM procedures and policies (e.g., test security and procedures), and an outline of responsibilities and roles.

The DLM Consortium has defined four participant roles in test delivery (Table 3). These titles are used throughout the assessment administration manuals and training resources.

- Test administrator
  - Assessment coordinator
  - Data manager
  - Technology personnel
- { One person may fill multiple roles. }

Information about the roles of data manager and technology personnel is included in this manual only as it supports assessment coordinators in their activities. The **DATA MANAGEMENT MANUAL** is specifically written for data managers and the **TECHNOLOGY SPECIFICATIONS MANUAL** is specifically written for technology personnel. These are available on each state’s page on the DLM website. The roles and responsibilities of the educators administering testlets are addressed in the **TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL**.



**Table 3**

*Tasks for Participant Roles*

<b>Title</b>	<b>Task Summary</b>
Assessment Coordinator	<p>The assessment coordinator is presumed to work at the district level and is the main point of contact between the state department, the DLM Service Desk, and the district. Some states are divided into regions and have regional coordinators with which the district assessment coordinator communicates. The information in this manual also pertains to regional coordinators.</p> <p>The assessment coordinator is responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Overseeing the assessment process</li><li>b. Managing educator roles and responsibilities</li><li>c. Developing and implementing a comprehensive training plan</li><li>d. Developing a schedule for assessment</li><li>e. Monitoring and supporting assessment preparations and administration</li><li>f. Developing a plan to facilitate communication with parents or guardians and staff</li></ul>
Data Manager	<p>The data manager is presumed to work at the district or building level but may be at a higher level.</p> <p>The key duty of the data manager is to maintain educator, student, and roster data. The assessment coordinator and data manager work together throughout the year. These roles may be interchangeable in some states.</p>

Title	Task Summary
Technology Personnel	<p>The technology personnel are presumed to work at the district or building level but may have a position at a higher level. The technology personnel do not always have or need access in Educator Portal.</p> <p>The technology personnel are responsible for the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Preparing the network</li> <li>b. Ensuring internet access is available and adequate for assessment</li> <li>c. Installing Educator Portal on educators' computers</li> <li>d. Preparing assessment devices for assessment administration</li> </ol>
Test Administrator	<p>The test administrators are educators with the role of teacher in Educator Portal.</p> <p>Test administrators are responsible for the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Working with Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams</li> <li>b. Selecting and entering the accessibility supports for each student into the Personal Needs and Preferences (PNP) Profile</li> <li>c. Completing the First Contact Survey for each student</li> <li>d. Completing Required Test Administrator Training</li> <li>e. Reviewing and verifying student data</li> <li>f. Instructing students on the Essential Elements</li> <li>g. Preparing students for assessments</li> <li>h. Administering the DLM alternate assessment to students</li> </ol>

## CHECKLISTS FOR ASSESSMENT COORDINATORS

### CHECKLISTS FOR ASSESSMENT COORDINATORS

HINT: Print these pages for your convenience!

The following checklists detail the critical steps for assessment coordinators to use. Refer to them when reading this manual and preparing the school or district for the DLM alternate assessment. Follow the links provided for more information to quickly navigate to topics in this guide or to access other resources.

The checklists are organized into four sets of tasks for different parts of the school year. Information about each task is developed in more detail later in this manual.

Table 4. Before Beginning Assessments

Table 5. Instructionally Embedded Assessments (Optional)

Table 6. Spring Assessment Window (Required)

Table 7. Prepare for Next Year


NOTE: The proctor role is no longer an available role in Educator Portal for DLM alternate assessments.

**Table 4**

#### *Before Beginning Assessments*

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tasks	Resources
	1. Use the resources on the state’s DLM webpage to become familiar with the DLM Alternate Assessment System, user roles and responsibilities, and the procedures and materials needed to prepare for the assessment, including the DLM support resources.	The DLM website, <b>For States</b>   state page   filter for Assessment Coordinator
	2. Activate your Educator Portal account by following the instructions in the Kite® activation email. See the section about User Roles in the DATA MANAGEMENT MANUAL to understand the permissions for each role in Educator Portal. (If you already have an active Educator Portal account, skip this step.)	See the section Activate Educator Portal Account in the EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE <a href="#">Educator Portal</a>
	3. Work with the State Assessment Administrator to activate accounts equal to the District Test Coordinator level.	

## CHECKLISTS FOR ASSESSMENT COORDINATORS

☑	Tasks	Resources
	 <p>4. Agree to the annual security agreement in Educator Portal. Users will have no access in Educator Portal until they agree to the security agreement each year.</p> <p>Review the Security Agreement extract in Educator Portal to monitor the test administrators' agreement.</p>	<p>See the section Complete Security Agreement in the EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE</p> <p><a href="#">Educator Portal</a></p>
	<p>5. Register for the DLM Test Updates that are emailed during the year.</p>	<p><a href="#">Test Updates</a></p>
	<p>6. Participate in DLM district-level trainings. State administrators may also provide their own training for assessment coordinators.</p>	<p>The DLM website, <b>States</b>   state page   filter for Assessment Coordinator   <a href="#">District Staff Training Resources</a></p>
	<p>7. Manage district and school staff roles and responsibilities.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Identify staff to fill the roles of technology personnel and data manager as needed. Designate backup personnel for each role.</li> <li>b. Identify educators who will serve as test administrators for the DLM alternate assessment.</li> <li>c. Make sure each person is aware of their roles and responsibilities and the timeline of events, including firm deadlines for required steps.</li> <li>d. Make sure the technology personnel, data manager, and test administrators understand the DLM assessment policies, procedures, and state-specific policies.</li> </ol>	<p>Checklists for data managers, technology personnel, and test administrators from role-specific manuals</p>

## CHECKLISTS FOR ASSESSMENT COORDINATORS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tasks	Resources
	<p>8. Develop and implement a comprehensive training plan or implement your state’s training plan for district staff and test administrators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Review the checklists for data managers, technology personnel, and test administrators.</li> <li>b. Encourage data managers and technology personnel to attend the district training.</li> <li>c. Facilitate Required Test Administrator Training (if assigned by the state).</li> <li>d. Monitor educator completion of all parts of Required Test Administrator Training and the security agreement by using the Training Status extract and the Security Agreement extract in Educator Portal.</li> <li>e. Identify additional training or resource needs specific to local DLM participants and develop resources to address needs.</li> <li>f. Encourage and monitor participation in the DLM professional development for instruction.</li> </ul>	<p>Checklists for data managers, technology personnel, and test administrators from role-specific manuals</p> <p>The DLM training for data managers and technology personnel</p> <p><a href="#">Required Test Administrator Training</a></p> <p>See the section Develop and Implement a Comprehensive Training Plan, page 33 of this manual</p>

## CHECKLISTS FOR ASSESSMENT COORDINATORS

☑	Tasks	Resources
☑	<p>9. Prepare for assessment implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Gather technology personnel and data manager contact information and initiate communication among district staff.</li> <li>b. Serve as the point of contact to the DLM Service Desk.</li> <li>c. Determine how you will receive communications from the state or regional coordinators for information that is specific to your district.</li> <li>d. Monitor creation of Educator Portal user accounts and deactivate accounts that are no longer needed.</li> <li>e. Follow up as needed to ensure deadlines are met for test administrators to activate accounts and complete training.</li> <li>f. Establish an assessment security plan and monitor adherence to the DLM- and state-specific test security policies.</li> <li>g. Troubleshoot issues as they arise.</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Test Updates</a></p> <p><a href="#">Educator Portal</a></p> <p>EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE</p> <p>See the section Prepare for Assessment Implementation, page 36 of this manual</p>
	<p>10. Monitor and support assessment preparations and administration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Remind technology personnel, data managers, and test administrators about important deadlines.</li> <li>b. Ensure every student who is supposed to participate in the DLM alternate assessment is enrolled in the correct grade in Educator Portal and rostered to the correct test administrator for the appropriate subjects for the student’s grade.</li> </ul> <hr/> <p>NOTE: If a student’s grade changes after the student started testing, the student will have to begin testing again at the new grade level. All previous testlets may no longer be available.</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Support test administrators and data managers in conducting data verification and revision within the two windows: the required fall window for</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Educator Portal</a></p> <p>EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE</p> <p>Participation guidelines on the DLM website</p> <p>Your state page on the DLM website</p> <p>Student Roster and First Contact Survey Status</p> <p>Guide to Practice Activities and Released Testlets on the DLM website</p>

## CHECKLISTS FOR ASSESSMENT COORDINATORS

☑	Tasks	Resources
	<p>English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, and the required spring assessment window for ELA, mathematics, and science. (Testing science in the fall window is optional but highly encouraged.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d. Use the Student Roster and First Contact Survey Status extract to verify each student’s First Contact Survey has a completion date and each student is on all the appropriate rosters.</li> <li>e. Monitor completion of the PNP Profile using the PNP Settings extract.</li> <li>f. Assist test administrators with technology preparations (e.g., making sure assistive devices are compatible with Student Portal) and readying the assessment environment (e.g., computer lab scheduling) as needed.</li> <li>g. Use the practice and released testlets to ensure computers are configured correctly (i.e., the minimum screen resolution required for Student Portal is 1,024 × 768). Other computer requirements are found at the <a href="#">Kite Suite</a> on the DLM website.</li> <li>h. Monitor the Current Kite System Status at the <a href="#">Kite Suite</a>.</li> <li>i. Ensure students’ usernames and passwords are printed. Usernames and passwords are secure and should be handled appropriately and securely destroyed after completion of testing. Although a student’s username remains the same from year to year, each year when the student is enrolled in Educator Portal, the student receives a new password.</li> </ul>	
	<p>11. Develop a plan to facilitate communication with parents or guardians and other district and building staff or follow your state-developed communication plan. Schedule meetings as necessary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Consider what parents or guardians and district staff will need and want to know about the DLM assessments.</li> <li>b. Determine the frequency of communication to various audiences.</li> </ul>	<p>The DLM website   <a href="#">About DLM</a>   <a href="#">DLM Assessments</a>   <a href="#">Information for Parents</a></p> <p>See the section <a href="#">Develop a Communication Plan</a></p>

## CHECKLISTS FOR ASSESSMENT COORDINATORS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tasks	Resources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>c. Deliver communication to various audiences according to the timeline in the communication plan.</li><li>d. Relay new information from the DLM Alternate Assessment Consortium and the state to other appropriate district and building audiences as needed.</li></ul>	with Parents and Guardians, Page 41 of this manual



## CHECKLISTS FOR ASSESSMENT COORDINATORS

**Table 5**

*Instructionally Embedded Assessment Window (Optional)*

☑	Tasks	Resources
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monitor and support test administration.</li> <li>2. Facilitate communication between the DLM staff and other district and building staff during the assessment window(s).</li> <li>3. View the helplet video <a href="#">Using the DLM Instruction and Assessment Planner</a> to learn how to use the Instruction and Assessment Planner for the optional instructionally embedded assessments. Follow the step-by-step guidance in the EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE.</li> <li>4. Students must be enrolled, rostered, and their First Contact Survey must be submitted, and their Personal Needs and Profile must be completed.</li> <li>5. Monitor the Training extract to ensure teachers have passed the Required Test Administrator Training.</li> <li>6. Monitor column Q in the DLM Test Administration extract to observe assessment activity during the optional instructionally embedded assessment window.</li> <li>7. Remind test administrators that student results during the optional instructionally embedded assessment window are not factored into the student’s end-of-year Individual Student Score Reports. Also, the results are not predictors of a student’s performance during the required spring assessment window.</li> <li>8. Serve as the first point of contact for test administrators, answering questions</li> </ol>	<p>TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL</p> <p>EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE</p> <p><a href="#">Educator Resource Videos</a></p>


## CHECKLISTS FOR ASSESSMENT COORDINATORS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tasks	Resources
	about the assessment. Troubleshoot issues as they arise. Serve as the point of contact for the DLM Service Desk.	

## CHECKLISTS FOR ASSESSMENT COORDINATORS

**Table 6**

*Spring Assessment Window (Required)*

?	Tasks	Resources
	<p>1. Substantiate assessment readiness.</p> <p>Verify that student demographic information is correct.</p> <p>Monitor suitable PNP settings were selected for each student by using the PNP Settings extract.</p> <p> Use the Student Roster and First Contact Survey Status extract to verify students are rostered to all appropriate subjects and that the First Contact Survey has been submitted.</p> <p>a. Use the First Contact Survey file in Educator Portal to monitor responses for each student.</p> <p>b. Ensure teachers have passed the Required Test Administrator Training if not completed before the optional window.</p>	<p>TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL</p> <p>EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE</p>
	<p>2. Monitor and support test administration.</p> <p>a. Facilitate communication between the DLM staff and test administrators during the assessment window.</p> <p>b. Ensure testing is completed before the end of the spring assessment window. Use the DLM Test Administration Monitoring extract.</p> <p>c. Serve as the first point of contact for test administrators, answering questions about the assessment. Troubleshoot issues as they arise.</p>	

## CHECKLISTS FOR ASSESSMENT COORDINATORS

**Table 7**

*Prepare for Next Year*

?	Tasks	Resources
	1. Prepare assessment coordinator plans for next year (develop calendar, design a communication plan, schedule required training, etc.).	
	2. Support test administrators in preparing for the next year (evaluate the PNP Profiles, review blueprints for the next grade, etc.). Familiarize teachers with the mini-maps to help with instruction.	TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL  EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE  Blueprints on the state page on the DLM website
	3. DLM consortium assessment window dates have been determined through the 2025-2026 school year. Contact your State Assessment Administrator for your state’s assessment window for the coming year.	

## ABOUT THE DYNAMIC LEARNING MAPS ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Educators use the Dynamic Learning Maps® (DLM®) Alternate Assessment System to assess what students with the most significant cognitive disabilities know and can do in the DLM subjects in grades 3–8 and one or more grades in high school. The subjects and grades that are assessed in each state are determined by the state’s department of education policy.

The DLM Alternate Assessment System provides accessibility by design and is guided by the core beliefs that all students should have access to challenging, grade-level content and that test administrators must adhere to the highest levels of integrity in providing instruction and in administering assessments based on this challenging content.

### *STUDENTS*

As defined by the U.S. Department of Education, students with the most significant cognitive disabilities have a disability or multiple disabilities that especially affect intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviors. When adaptive behaviors are significantly affected, students are unlikely to develop the skills needed to live independently and to function safely in daily life once they reach adulthood. The DLM alternate assessment is designed for students for whom general education assessments, even with accommodations, are not appropriate.

Students taking the DLM alternate assessment require extensive direct instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains. They are to receive academic instruction aligned to grade-level content standards, but at a reduced depth, breadth, and level of complexity.

Check your state’s participation guidelines for eligibility requirements.

### *THE DLM FOUNDATION FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATHEMATICS*

The DLM learning map models are highly connected representations of how academic skills are acquired, as reflected in research literature. Both ELA and mathematics have a fully developed learning map model. ELA and mathematics are assessed in each grade 3–8 and one or more grades in high school, depending on state policy.

Nodes in the maps represent discrete knowledge, skills, and understandings in either English language arts (ELA) or mathematics, as well as important foundational skills that provide the groundwork for academic skills. The maps go beyond traditional learning progressions by including multiple and alternate pathways through which students may develop content knowledge. The ELA map has more than 2,000 nodes. The mathematics map has more than 2,300 nodes. More than 150 foundational nodes are associated with both subject maps. More than 10,000 connections are made between the nodes in the two combined maps.

### *SCIENCE DEVELOPMENT*

In 2014, five DLM member states began a two-phase development of a science assessment following the DLM model. Since that time, most of the consortium states have joined the effort.

Phase I of science development included a 2016 spring operational assessment based on alternate science content standards at three levels of complexity in three grade bands. Phase II, which is in progress, includes the development of a learning map model for science. Additionally, several professional development products supporting science instruction have been developed and more are in progress.

### *DLM ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS*

The DLM content standards for ELA, mathematics, and science are called Essential Elements. The purpose of the Essential Elements is to build a bridge from the grade-level content standards in each state to the academic expectations for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

### *ELA AND MATHEMATICS ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS*

ELA and mathematics Essential Elements are linked to the common core state standards. ELA and mathematics learning map models each have small sections with one or more related nodes that represent critical concepts or skills needed to learn the Essential Element for the subject. These small sections are at different levels of complexity and are called linkage levels.

### *ELA AND MATHEMATICS LINKAGE LEVELS*

The DLM alternate assessment provides testlets for ELA and mathematics at five linkage levels. The Target linkage level is based on nodes that align to the knowledge and skills described by the Essential Element and indicate a student's performance in relationship to the grade-level target. Then, multiple pathways on the map were carefully inspected to identify nodes that link to the Target linkage level, both preceding and extending beyond it.

The least complex linkage level is called Initial Precursor. Testlets developed at that linkage level reflects foundational nodes in the DLM map, (e.g., focus attention), which are skills and understandings necessary for learning subsequent academic content. Testlets at this level are typically intended for students who do not yet have symbolic communication and are administered by the test administrator, who follows the instructions within the testlet, observes the student's behavior, and then records the student's responses in the testlet in Student Portal.

Two additional linkage levels are between the Initial Precursor and the Target linkage levels: Distal Precursor and Proximal Precursor. These linkage levels reflect nodes along the multiple pathways in the DLM learning map model that identify significant

milestones on the way to the Target linkage level. The Successor linkage level extends beyond the Target linkage level.

Some Distal Precursor linkage level testlets may also be teacher-administered. The Proximal Precursor, Target, and Successor linkage levels are typically computer-delivered, although sometimes, depending on the skills being assessed, they also may be teacher-administered testlets.

### *SCIENCE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS*

The science Essential Elements are specific statements of knowledge and skills and are linked to grade-level expectations identified in the National Research Council's Framework for K–12 Science Education. These Essential Elements include science and engineering practices.

The science Essential Elements are described in grade-band performance expectations by the end of each grade band instead of standards for each grade level like ELA and mathematics:

- Grade 5 for the 3–5 elementary grade band
- Grade 8 for the 6–8 middle school grade band
- Grade 11 for the 9–11 high school grade band

### *SCIENCE LINKAGE LEVELS*

Since the learning map model for science is not fully developed at this time, some differences occur between science and ELA and mathematics; for example, science Essential Elements have only three linkage levels instead of five.

The Target linkage level is the highest for science. Testlets at the Target linkage level are written at the level of the Essential Element and are aligned to each state's grade-level science standards. The other two science linkage levels are lower in depth, breadth, and level of complexity than the Target linkage level.

The Initial linkage level is the lowest of the three linkage levels. Testlets at this level are typically intended for students who do not yet have symbolic communication. Like ELA and mathematics at the lowest linkage level, these testlets are administered outside of Student Portal by the test administrator, who follows the instructions within the testlet, observes the student's behavior, and then records the student's responses in the testlet in Student Portal. The Precursor linkage level is between the Initial and the Target linkage level. Students usually take the Precursor and Target linkage level testlets on the computer, although sometimes, depending on the skills being assessed, they can be teacher-administered.

## ASSESSMENT SYSTEM DESIGN AND DELIVERY

### *BLUEPRINTS*

Testing blueprints are a subset of Essential Elements used to develop assessments. The Essential Elements in the blueprints were selected by DLM Consortium state education leaders along with DLM staff. In the required spring assessment window, students are tested over all Essential Elements in the blueprints for each subject.

The ELA and mathematics blueprints contain Essential Elements from specific ELA claims and conceptual area for each grade. The science blueprints contain Essential Elements from specific science domains and core ideas by grade band. Science blueprints are in two versions.

- Blueprint Science Phase 1 General (used in most states)
- Blueprint Science Phase 1 with Biology (used in Delaware, District of Columbia, and Maryland only)

### *DLM TESTLETS*

DLM assessments are short and are called testlets; they include three to nine items, depending on the subject. Together, the items increase the instructional relevance of the assessment and provide a better estimate of a student’s knowledge, skills, and understanding of the Essential Elements than can be achieved by a single assessment item. In the TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL, readers will find a description of specific item types used in the testlets and screenshots of testlet pages. Each testlet assesses only one Essential Element except for the writing testlet, which assesses all writing Essential Elements together in one testlet.

Testlet structure differs slightly between subjects based on research of effective instructional practices for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Engagement activities are part of all testlets and are designed to motivate students, provide a context, and activate prior knowledge.

## ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES FOR ELA, MATHEMATICS, AND SCIENCE

### *ELA ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY*

ELA testlets begin with an engagement activity. Reading testlets are designed around texts that are adapted from grade-level themes but at a reduced depth, breadth, and level of complexity compared to general education grade-level texts. The DLM texts are written to support assessment of the specific knowledge and skills described in the nodes at an appropriate level of challenge.

During a reading testlet, students participate in two readings of a text. The first reading is a shared reading activity that familiarizes students with the entire text and serves as an engagement activity. The second reading includes items that are either embedded



within the text or sometimes placed at the end of the text. Embedded items are most often used because they reduce cognitive load and reliance on long-term memory.

During writing assessments, the test administrator follows a standardized procedure in which the student selects a topic and writes about it. This serves as the engagement activity. The test administrator observes the student's writing and then responds to items about their observations. The engagement activity for the writing testlet is described in detail in the TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL.

### *MATHEMATICS ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY*

Mathematics testlets begin with an engagement activity. It is designed to activate prior knowledge, prepare students for the cognitive process required in the items, and/or provide a context for the items. The engagement activity does not include any items or require a response. Mathematics testlets are built around a common scenario to investigate related facets of the student's understanding of the targeted content.

### *SCIENCE ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY*

For each science testlet, the engagement activity is at the beginning, followed by three to five items. Science engagement activities can be one of four types.

- The first type of engagement activity is simply a single screen with one or two pictures along with a short sentence that introduces the science topic to be assessed. The items in this testlet will not assess the engagement screen itself but instead will assess the Essential Element topic.
- A second type of engagement activity describes a scenario which taps prior knowledge or experience, introduces the concept to be addressed, and/or provides context for the items. The items in this testlet type will assess information in the engagement activity as well as the Essential Element topic.
- A third type of engagement activity may be designed around a science story featuring an experiment or classroom activity that is presented twice with items embedded within or at the end of the second presentation of the activity. The items in this testlet type will assess information in the engagement activity and in the Essential Element topic.
- The fourth type of engagement activity is a short silent video (up to 30 seconds) and is only found in the upper grade bands and the upper linkage levels. Students will access the short video and then respond to three items that include still-frame photos from the video. The items assess information from both the video and the Essential Element topic.

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NOTE: The entire video clip is completely soundless.

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## CUSTOMIZATION FOR EACH STUDENT

The First Contact Survey and the Personal Needs and Preferences (PNP) Profile are collections of data for each student who is enrolled in Educator Portal. After the student is rostered to a teacher, the teacher enters the student's individualized data in Educator Portal, and the system uses the data to customize testlets in each subject.

### *FIRST CONTACT SURVEY*

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IMPORTANT NOTE: For the 2023–2024 school year, several changes were made in the First Contact Survey. The status of all surveys will be **Not Started**. Teachers must start each student's survey anew, answering all required questions before submitting the survey. Each survey will take approximately 15–20 minutes to complete.

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The purpose of the First Contact Survey is to collect basic demographic information about each student who is eligible for the DLM alternate assessments. In addition to the demographic information, the survey includes items on communication, assistive technology devices, motor and sensory impairments, and academic performance. The data is analyzed using a complex algorithm and then used to assign the linkage level for each Essential Element for each subject at the beginning of the spring window.

The First Contact Survey must be submitted every year and is typically the responsibility of the test administrator, although the district and building assessment coordinators also have permission in Educator Portal to submit it. The assessment coordinator's main responsibility with the survey is to provide guidance to test administrators and to monitor that they have successfully submitted each student's survey before the opening of the assessment window. The test administrator will not be able to administer an assessment until the First Contact Survey is submitted.

The First Contact Survey is discussed in the Required Test Administrator Training, and all the items in the survey are listed in the appendix of the TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL.

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NOTE: If the First Contact Survey is submitted after the opening of the spring assessment window, access to the first testlet is delayed up to 24 hours from the time the survey is submitted.

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### *PERSONAL NEEDS AND PREFERENCES PROFILE*

The PNP Profile is where test administrators can choose supports that help make the assessment more accessible for each student. Information in the ACCESSIBILITY MANUAL will be very useful to the test administrator when selecting appropriate settings. Not every student will need special settings. The assessment coordinator's responsibility is

to provide guidance to test administrators and to use the PNP Settings extract to monitor settings.

The PNP Profile is discussed in the Required Test Administrator Training. Additionally, a short helplet video on the DLM website, [Completing the First Contact Survey and PNP Profile](#), provides detailed training on how to complete the student's First Contact Survey and the PNP Profile in Educator Portal.

Some allowable supports are outside of the system and not marked in the PNP Profile. One of those is a recent enhancement to Kite® Student Portal to allow additional displays (monitors and projectors) to be connected to a computer. This is useful when needing to use a projector for students with different visual abilities.

Kite Student Portal will now only display on the primary display and the additional screen will have a blank screen or will mirror the primary display. To use an additional display, adjust display settings so that the projector is set as the primary display or for display mirroring. This will only work on the most current version of Kite Student Portal. For help setting this up, contact your technology staff.

## DESIGN AND DELIVERY IN THE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

### *OPTIONAL INSTRUCTIONALLY EMBEDDED ASSESSMENTS*

Instructionally embedded testlets are available for students to practice in a special optional window during the fall and winter months. Test administration tasks are in the Instruction and Assessment Planner section of Educator Portal.

The system uses the First Contact Survey data as described earlier. However, in this optional window, the level of complexity for each Essential Element is **recommended**, not assigned. The test administrator can accept the recommendation or select another. Also, complete coverage of the test blueprints is **not** required. Testing results are **not** included in the end-of-year Individual Student Score Reports.

### *REQUIRED SPRING ASSESSMENT WINDOW*

Required testlets are delivered during the spring assessment window. The administrative tasks are in the Test Management section of Educator Portal. The system uses the same First Contact Survey data as it did in the optional window for each Essential Element. However, in this window, the system **assigns** the order in which the Essential Elements are tested and **assigns** the linkage level of each Essential Element. The test administrator cannot change these.

The linkage level of the first Essential Element being assessed is determined from data in the First Contact Survey. The testlets are adaptive, and the linkage level assigned to subsequent Essential Elements being tested is based on the performance results from the previous testlet.

The system may take up to 15 minutes to deliver the student's next testlet in a subject. Testlets are intended to be administered across multiple sessions to prevent fatiguing the student and to give the test administrator adequate time to make the necessary preparations. After the student submits a testlet in a subject, while the system generates the next testlet and its Testlet Information Page, the student could be administered a testlet in one of the other subjects to which the student is rostered. The actions taken should always be what is best for the student.

HINT: If a subject is rostered after the opening of the spring window, the assignment of the first testlet system will be delayed up to 24 hours .

*SCHEDULING AND DURATION IN MINUTES FOR EACH TESTLET*

The test administrator is responsible for setting the testing schedule. Testlets may be taken separately across multiple assessment sessions as long as the blueprint requirements in each subject are met by the end of the required spring assessment window. The amount of time for each individual testlet varies depending on the subject and the student. Table 8 provides the approximate number of minutes for each testlet by subject and the average overall timeframe for all testlets in a subject.

**Table 8**

*Required Spring Assessment Duration by Subject*

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Minutes for each testlet</b>	<b>Average Overall Duration in Minutes</b>
ELA	10–15	70–90
Mathematics	5–10	35–60
Science	5–10	45–135

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NOTE: The times listed do not include test administrator preparation time for the assessments, which may include gathering materials, printing picture-response cards, preparing for the writing testlet, and embossing braille testlets, etc.

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*NUMBER OF ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS TESTED DURING THE SPRING ASSESSMENT WINDOW*

Table 9 shows the number of operational testlets required during the spring assessment window to test all Essential Elements in the blueprint. It is organized by grade for each subject area.

**Table 9***Number of Expected Testlets by Grade and Subject*

<b>Grade</b>	<b>ELA Testlets</b>	<b>Mathematics Testlets</b>	<b>Science Testlets</b>	<b>Field Test Testlets</b>
<b>3</b>	9	8	9	0 or 1
<b>4</b>	9	8	9	0 or 1
<b>5</b>	9	8	9	0 or 1
<b>6</b>	9	7	9	0 or 1
<b>7</b>	9	7	9	0 or 1
<b>8</b>	9	8	9	0 or 1
<b>9</b>	9	7	9*	0 or 1
<b>10</b>	9	8	9*	0 or 1
<b>11</b>	9	6	9*	0 or 1
<b>12</b>	9	0	9*	0 or 1

\*In DE, DC, and MD, students will receive 10 total testlets.

#### *FIELD TEST TESTLETS*

Field test testlets for ELA, mathematics, and science are delivered during the spring assessment window after the blueprint requirements have been met. The student may receive zero or one field test in each subject. The linkage level of the field test testlet may be one linkage level above, one linkage level below, or the same linkage level as the operational testlet that was taken for that Essential Element.

Testing results from field test testlets are **not** included in the end-of-year Individual Student Score Reports.

#### *ANNUAL SPRING TEACHER SURVEY IN STUDENT PORTAL*

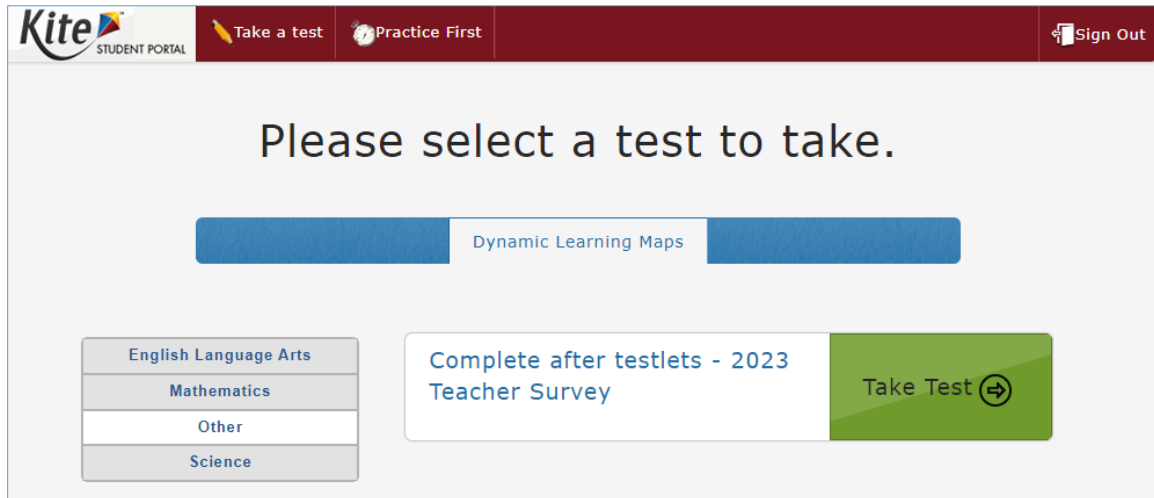
Each year in the spring assessment window, a teacher survey is available in Kite Student Portal. The survey is an essential part of data collection in support of the assessment’s validity argument and the technical evidence submitted to peer review. The first time the student signs into Student Portal, the survey will be available under the **Other** tab, as shown in Figure 1. Best practice is for the student to complete all the testlets before the teacher responds to the survey questions.

The teacher survey includes three blocks of items. The first and third blocks are fixed sections that all teachers will receive. The second block is a spiraled set of items that are

randomly assigned across all surveys. The assessment coordinator can review the survey questions by requesting them from their state assessment administrator, and the survey questions can also be provided to their test administrators.

**Figure 1**

*Annual Spring Teacher Survey in Student Portal*



*PRACTICE ACTIVITIES AND RELEASED TESTLETS*

The DLM Alternate Assessment System provides practice activities and released testlets to help test administrators and students prepare for assessments.

- **Practice activities** are designed to familiarize users with the way testlets look in the Kite Student Portal. One activity is for educators and the other is for students.
- **Released testlets** are like operational DLM testlets in content and format. A released testlet is a publicly available, sample DLM assessment.
  - Information on accessing practice activities and released testlets using demo student accounts is included in the TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL. Additionally, this information is found in the GUIDE TO PRACTICE ACTIVITIES AND RELEASED TESTLETS.

**ABOUT THE KITE SUITE**

The Kite Suite provides an online testing interface. It was designed to deliver the next generation of large-scale assessments and was tailored to meet the needs of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Students and educators each use a different part of the Kite Suite.



Students have accounts in **Kite Student Portal**.

Kite Student Portal is the customized secure interface used to deliver the assessment to students. Each year, the most current version of Student

Portal must be installed on the student’s testing device. A student’s username remains the same from year to year, but for security purposes, each year when the student is enrolled in Educator Portal, the student is assigned a brand-new password.

Educators and staff do **not** have accounts in Student Portal. Students have their own unique username and password. Either the student signs in, or their test administrator signs in for the student. **The most current version of Kite Student Portal must be used and can be found on the [Kite Suite](#) page on the DLM website.**

Once Student Portal is launched, other websites or other applications cannot be accessed during the assessment. Student Portal on iPads has an auto-lock feature that prevents students from using other apps while Student Portal is in use.

Practice activities and released testlets are also available in Student Portal using demo usernames and passwords.



Staff and educators have accounts in **Kite Educator Portal**.

Educator Portal is the administrative application through which staff and educators manage student data and retrieve reports and extracts. Users

can access Educator Portal online using [a supported browser](#). For information on how to work within Educator Portal, see the EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE on the [DLM website](#).

## HOW TO USE THE DLM WEBSITE

Additional resources for test administrators, assessment coordinators, data managers, and technology personnel are available on the DLM website. Resources are provided by the DLM Consortium, and state-specific resources may also be available.

To access resources for each state and role, follow these steps:

1. Access the [DLM website](#).
2. Hover over **For States** in the blue banner to reveal a dropdown list of states.
3. Select your state.

HINT: Bookmark the page or save it to your favorites for quick access later.

### *RESOURCES ON THE DLM WEBSITE*

Table 10 lists DLM resources and their main purpose. These resources are available on most state webpages.

#### **Table 10**

##### *Purpose of DLM Resources*

Resource	Purpose
ACCESSIBILITY MANUAL (PDF)	<p>Provides guidance on the selection of accessibility supports available for use when testing in Student Portal</p> <p>This manual is appropriate for any educator who supports students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.</p>
ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR MANUAL (PDF)	Supports the assessment coordinator in preparing district and school staff for assessment
DATA MANAGEMENT MANUAL (PDF)	Supports the data manager in gathering, editing, and uploading data via Educator Portal for users, students, and rosters
EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE (PDF)	Supports educators in navigating Educator Portal to access assessment information, including student data and reports
Guide to DLM Required Test Administrator Training (PDF)	Guides test administrators through required training modules and post-tests and how to access them in the DLM Training Courses website
Guide to Practice Activities & Released Testlets (PDF)	Supports the test administrator in accessing practice activities in Student Portal using demo student accounts
TECHNOLOGY SPECIFICATIONS MANUAL (PDF)	Supports the technology personnel in preparing schools for the technology needs of the DLM alternate assessment
TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL (PDF)	Supports test administrators in preparing themselves and their students for assessments; expands the knowledge base for the assessment coordinator on specific topics
Test Updates Page	<p>Provides important updates on test administration activities</p> <p>Go to the <a href="#">Test Updates</a> page of the DLM website to register to receive alerts when new resources become available.</p>



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## PREPARE FOR THE DYNAMIC LEARNING MAPS ASSESSMENT ADMINISTRATION

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### OVERVIEW

The key duties of the assessment coordinator are the following:

- Ensure students are enrolled and rostered correctly

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NOTE: If a student was enrolled in the wrong grade and the grade is corrected after the student started testing, the student will have to begin testing again at the new grade. All previously completed testlets may no longer be available.

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- Oversee the assessment process, including managing staff and educator roles and responsibilities
- Develop and implement a comprehensive training plan
- Develop a schedule for assessment implementation
- Monitor and support assessment preparations and administration
- Use the extracts and reports to monitor testing progress
- Develop a communication plan with parents or guardians and staff

### DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING PLAN

*DLM TRAINING FOR DISTRICT ROLES AND HELPLET VIDEOS FOR ASSESSMENT COORDINATORS, DATA MANAGERS, AND TECHNOLOGY PERSONNEL*

- A prerecorded video, Dynamic Learning Maps® (DLM®) Training for District Roles, is available on each state’s DLM website. The training is interactive and includes a short, closed-captioned introductory video for each role followed by self-directed components that explain the role further and link to pertinent resources. Also, an optional, ungraded resource, *Check For Understanding*, concludes the training for each role.
- Many one- to five-minute helplet videos are available on how to do specific tasks in Educator Portal, such as Getting Started in Educator Portal and Completing the First Contact Survey and PNP Profile to help test administrators complete the PNP Profile and the First Contact Survey. The helplet videos are closed-captioned.

HINT: All resources listed above are located on [the DLM website](#); none are in Educator Portal.

*RESOURCES FOR TEST ADMINISTRATORS*

In addition to the previously described resources, the DLM Consortium provides required training modules, professional development instructional support, and supplemental training helplets for test administrators. These training modules are in the form of self-directed and facilitated professional development modules. Table 11 compares these three categories.

**Table 11**

*Available Training and Professional Development*

<b>Required Test Administrator Training</b>	<b>Professional Development for Instruction</b>	<b>Supplemental Training</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. All test administrators must pass the Required Test Administrator Training modules with a score of 80% or higher.</li> <li>b. Critical content for managing and delivering the DLM alternate assessment is covered.</li> <li>c. State administrators decide which format(s) to offer for new test administrator training: self-directed, facilitated, or both.</li> <li>d. All returning test administrator training is self-directed only.</li> <li>e. Test administrators will not be able to deliver testlets until training is successfully completed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. All PD modules are strongly recommended.</li> <li>b. The modules support academic instruction for students who take the DLM alternate assessment.</li> <li>c. Most modules are created for students at the Target linkage level. Teachers who have students who take testlets at the lower linkage levels will need to adjust the module information for them.</li> <li>d. Several modules are available for students at the lowest linkage levels and for those with foundational presymbolic communication.</li> <li>e. Watching the professional development modules is strongly recommended.</li> <li>f. State and district administrators may recommend or require specific modules.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. All supplemental training is strongly recommended.</li> <li>b. Supplemental training addresses a variety of DLM materials and system navigation topics.</li> <li>c. Supplemental training includes short helplet videos—typically one to five minutes long on one topic. A couple of longer presentations are also available.</li> <li>d. Supplemental training modules do not include a quiz.</li> </ul>

Required Test Administrator Training	Professional Development for Instruction	Supplemental Training
	g. State administrators decide which format(s) to offer—self-directed, facilitated, or both.	

**Required Test Administrator Training**

Training is required for all test administrators who will administer the DLM alternate assessments. In addition to test administrators, other educators such as the district and building assessment coordinators may be required to take the training. State policy determines the roles that are required to take the courses, the courses that are offered, and the format of the courses. The training covers all three DLM subjects, test security, and information about Educator Portal.

After a test administrator signs into Educator Portal, they access the Required Test Administrator Training course on the home screen by selecting the Training tab. It will then display the Required Test Administrator Training course. Separate login credentials are not needed to access training.

All users who are assigned the teacher role in Educator Portal are referred to as test administrators and must annually take the Required Test Administrator Training. The first year, they must take the course for new test administrators, and they must successfully complete four modules with a passing score of 80% or higher on each module’s post-test before being allowed to administer the DLM alternate assessment. Participants may repeat the modules and the post-tests multiple times if needed until a passing score is achieved. Total training time is estimated at about 2.5 hours unless modules and post-tests are taken more than once.

If a test administrator is unable to complete all four modules in one sitting, after completing one or more modules, they can sign out. Then when ready to begin again, they sign back into Educator Portal, select the Training tab, and begin the next available module.

During subsequent years, the state administrators decide whether to require returning test administrators to complete the 2.5-hour new training course again or take the shorter 1-hour returning training course. The returning course is in four sections, and each section corresponds to one of the four modules from the new test administrator training course. The returning training course has one post-test at the end.

Participants in the returning course have only one opportunity to pass the post-test with a passing score of 80% or higher before administering the DLM alternate assessment. If

participants do not pass the post-test, they will be directed back to the module from the new training course that corresponds to the section(s) where they incorrectly answered items. Participants may repeat any of the modules and post-tests from the new training course multiple times if needed until a passing score is achieved.

In states where the returning training course is offered, user records in Educator Portal are used to identify a returning test administrator. If a test administrator administered the DLM alternate assessment in the past, but not in the immediately preceding year, that test administrator will be placed in the new course again.

In both the new training course and the returning training course, state administrators may also include additional training modules, such as professional development modules, which will add to the training time.

HINT: For complete directions and information on the required training course, use the [GUIDE TO DLM REQUIRED TEST ADMINISTRATOR TRAINING](#) located on the DLM website for complete information.

### Professional Development for Instructional Support

Professional development for instruction is strongly encouraged. A variety of content and modules are offered that can be incorporated into a district training plan. The modules can be taken as an online, self-directed course or as a facilitated course in a group.

- Each online, self-directed module lasts approximately 30–45 minutes and focuses on a single topic related to the instruction of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Post-tests accompany the modules followed by certificates of completion that are emailed to the participant.
- Facilitated modules for groups cover the same content as self-directed modules. The facilitator is provided with materials to support them in addressing a group of test administrators. A post-test also accompanies these modules.
- Most educators are required to participate in regular, ongoing professional development. Some states give continuing education credits for the DLM professional development modules. After passing the post-test for each module, educators are emailed their certificate of completion and should provide the certificate to the appropriate staff to receive continuing education credits, if available in your state.
- Access the modules on the [professional development website](#).
- The [DLM Instructional Supports Facebook page](#) encourages collaboration among educators across the consortium.

## PREPARE FOR ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION

To prepare for assessment implementation, consider these tasks:

- Initiate communication among district staff.
- Encourage staff to register for Test Updates on the DLM website.
- Determine how communications will be facilitated between state department staff, other district and building staff, and test administrators.
- Ensure educators understand they are not to email or send via chat any student PII information or secure testing materials.

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NOTE: All information in an email is taken into consideration when checking for PII violations. The electronic signature for the sender of an email may identify the district or school in which a student resides. This information, combined with other student identifying information, may constitute a PII violation for your state.

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- Use Educator Portal extracts and files to monitor assessment administration readiness.
  - Download the User extract to monitor roles and to determine whether an account should be active, pending, or inactive in Educator Portal. Users who should no longer have an active account for the district should be inactivated.
  - Use the Training Status extract to monitor whether training was successfully completed.
  - Use the Student Roster and First Contact Survey Status extract to monitor the date and time when each student's First Contact Survey was submitted and whether the student has been rostered to all appropriate subjects.
  - Use the PNP Settings extract to monitor whether suitable settings were selected for each student. Not every student needs special settings in the PNP Profile.
- Establish an assessment security plan and monitor adherence to the DLM and state-specific test-security policies. Consider these tasks when developing a plan:
  - Designate the assessment location(s); a quiet, private environment is best.
  - Adhere to state and district policies for assessment security.
  - Troubleshoot issues if security issues arise.

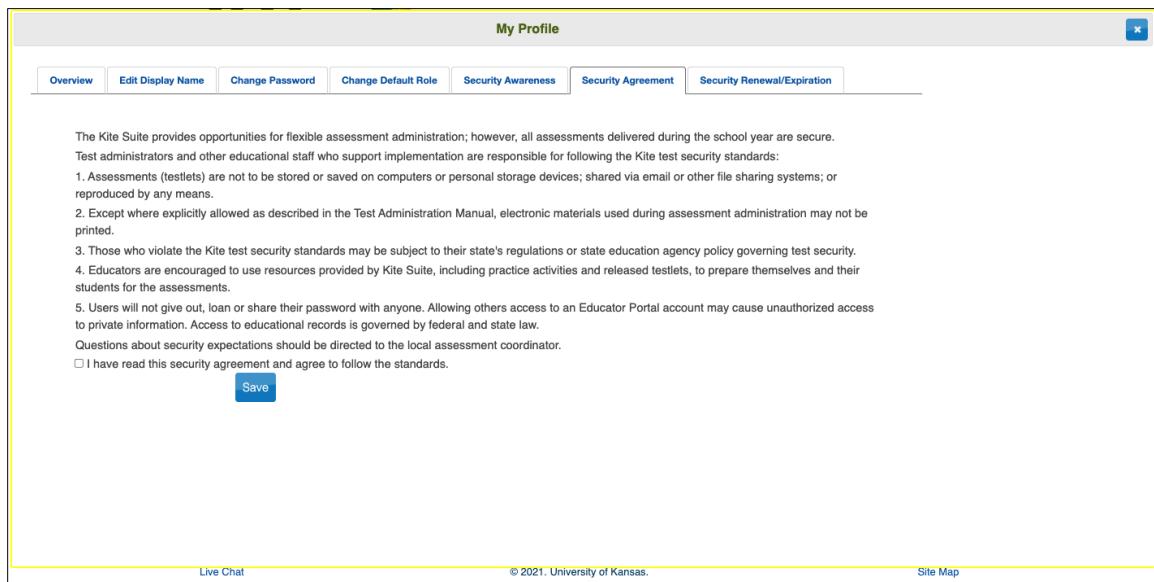
## *AGREE TO THE SECURITY AGREEMENT*

DLM alternate assessments are secure. Each year, during the first week of August, the security agreement from the previous year expires. All Educator Portal users must renew their DLM security agreement when they first sign into Educator Portal. They will not have access to any data in Educator Portal until this step is completed. The security agreement covers five security policies.

Figure 2 displays the text of the security agreement.

**Figure 2**

### *Security Agreement*



The screenshot shows a web interface titled "My Profile" with a navigation bar containing tabs: Overview, Edit Display Name, Change Password, Change Default Role, Security Awareness, Security Agreement (selected), and Security Renewal/Expiration. The main content area displays the following text:

The Kite Suite provides opportunities for flexible assessment administration; however, all assessments delivered during the school year are secure. Test administrators and other educational staff who support implementation are responsible for following the Kite test security standards:

1. Assessments (testlets) are not to be stored or saved on computers or personal storage devices; shared via email or other file sharing systems; or reproduced by any means.
2. Except where explicitly allowed as described in the Test Administration Manual, electronic materials used during assessment administration may not be printed.
3. Those who violate the Kite test security standards may be subject to their state's regulations or state education agency policy governing test security.
4. Educators are encouraged to use resources provided by Kite Suite, including practice activities and released testlets, to prepare themselves and their students for the assessments.
5. Users will not give out, loan or share their password with anyone. Allowing others access to an Educator Portal account may cause unauthorized access to private information. Access to educational records is governed by federal and state law.

Questions about security expectations should be directed to the local assessment coordinator.

I have read this security agreement and agree to follow the standards.

Save

At the bottom of the page, there are links for "Live Chat", "© 2021. University of Kansas.", and "Site Map".



If DLM staff discover that a user's account is being retrieved and used by someone other than the account owner, that account will be considered compromised. It will be sequestered until a state assessment administrator notifies the DLM Service Desk to unlock the account and reset the password.

**HINT:** Work with the data manager to ensure students who are transferring into or out of a classroom after the spring assessment window has opened have accurate records and receive testlets at the appropriate school. A student who has begun testing in one school and transfers to another can continue testing as soon as the student is enrolled in the new school and rostered. All completed testlets follow the student.

### *RESPONSIBILITIES FOR BRAILLE TEST ADMINISTRATION*

Assessment coordinators monitor and support the administration of braille forms during the optional and required windows. Uncontracted braille forms are available for ELA and mathematics in the optional instructionally embedded assessment window. In the spring window, uncontracted braille forms are available for ELA, mathematics, and science. However, braille forms are only available for some Essential Elements and only at upper linkage levels. Braille forms are available in

- EBAE
- UEB with Nemeth
- UEB Math/Science

For more information about braille, go to the [Braille Authority of North America \(BANA\)](#) website. The BANA position statement "Terminology: UEB Math/Science and UEB with Nemeth" was adopted in September 2020 and is available in a PDF on their website.

The DLM alternate assessment tests the student's knowledge and understanding of the Essential Elements and not the student's ability to use braille. Therefore, braille is not to be selected for emerging braille readers. Test administrators select the braille form in the student's PNP Profile.

When a braille form is not available, test administrators will need to use other approaches to deliver assessments to students who are blind or have visual impairments. For more information, see the section Testlets for Students Who Are Blind or Have Visual Impairments in the TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL. Also, read the ACCESSIBILITY MANUAL for approaches for working with students who are blind or visually impaired.

#### **Braille Form Delivery**

By selecting one or more braille forms in the PNP Profile, the system will assign the appropriate braille form to the student whenever possible. For the optional instructionally embedded assessment window, the braille forms and their Testlet Information Pages (TIPs) are in the Instruction and Assessment Planner for ELA and mathematics. During the spring assessment window, the braille forms and their TIPs for all three subjects are in the Test Management section of Educator Portal.

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NOTE: Science testlets do not have braille forms in the optional instructionally embedded assessment window.

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All Braille Ready Files (BRF) are delivered via Educator Portal and must be embossed locally. All testlets, including braille testlets, are adaptive in the spring assessment window. Therefore, the time needed for the system to assign the next testlet and the time needed to complete the embossing process must be calculated into the

assessment preparation time. The TIP for a braille file has only a cover sheet since a braille testlet includes only text and no images.

Go to the section Retrieve Braille Ready File in the EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE.

Table 12 has information about the potential availability of braille forms for each subject, grade, and linkage level and where the forms are delivered for each window.

**Table 12**

*Braille Form Delivery by Subject and Grade*

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Grades</b>	<b>Linkage Levels</b>	<b>Windows</b>	<b>Where braille form is delivered</b>
ELA and mathematics	3–5	Target and Successor	The optional instructionally embedded assessment window	Instruction and Assessment Planner in Educator Portal
			Spring assessment window	Test Management in Educator Portal
ELA and mathematics	6–8 and HS	Proximal Precursor, Target, and Successor	The optional instructionally embedded assessment window	Instruction and Assessment Planner in Educator Portal
			Spring assessment window	Test Management in Educator Portal
Science	3–8 and HS	Target	Spring assessment window only	Test Management in Educator Portal

**Scoring a Student’s Response for Braille Testlets**

When the system assigns a braille testlet, the system also delivers a computer-based equivalent version in Student Portal for the test administrator to use. As the student takes the testlet on the embossed paper version, the student indicates each response choice to the test administrator as is normally done on other braille assignments. The test administrator inputs each student response into the testlet in Student Portal. Responses are then scored by the system in the same way as with non-braille forms.



## STUDENT REPORTS

### *INDIVIDUAL STUDENT SCORE REPORTS*

The scoring system for the DLM alternate assessment works differently than scoring for traditional alternate assessments. Students are not given raw scores, percentage correct scores, or scale scores. Instead, all operational results from the spring assessment window are summarized in the Individual Student Score Reports.

For ELA and mathematics, summative results are based on the tested Essential Elements from the testing blueprint during the spring assessment window. The system combines a student's responses on all operational testlets with information about the structure of the DLM learning map models to determine which linkage levels the student has likely mastered during this window. The information about each linkage level leads to a summary of the student's mastery of skills in each conceptual area for ELA, in each claim for mathematics, and then for each subject overall.

For science, summative results are based on the tested Essential Elements from the science blueprint that are assessed only during the spring assessment window. The information about each linkage level leads to a summary of the student's mastery of skills in each science domain and for science overall.

Individual Student Score Reports, commonly called ISRs, become available to the state assessment administrator in mid-June to mid-July, depending on when the state's spring assessment window closed. Each state will also decide which Educator Portal roles will have direct access to the ISRs in Educator Portal. In most states, when school begins again in the fall, the building or district assessment coordinators provide the test administrators with the ISRs for the students they tested the past spring.

Directions on how to access the ISRs are described in the section Access Reports and Extracts of the EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE.

HINT: Neither results from testlets taken during the optional instructionally embedded assessment window nor results from field test testlets factor into the Individual Student Score Reports. Only results from operational testlets taken during the spring assessment window are used for the end-of-year Individual Student Score Reports.

## DEVELOP A COMMUNICATION PLAN WITH PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

The DLM Consortium suggests either developing a plan to facilitate communication between parents or guardians and district staff or following the state-developed communication plan. Schedule meetings as necessary.

The DLM Consortium provides a Parent Notification Letter as an editable Word document, which is available in English and Spanish. These resources are available to download and edit to fit the needs of a state or district. The DLM Consortium also offers information and resources for parents or guardians on the DLM website | [About DLM](#) | [DLM Assessments](#) | [Information for Parents](#).

Also, inform parents and guardians that they can download Student Portal on their home computer and use the DLM practice activities and released testlets at home with their student.

## DATA EXTRACTS

Many extracts and files are available in a CSV format in Educator Portal. They can be downloaded, sorted, and the data analyzed. Using the data, testing readiness can be monitored before the opening of the testing window. During their state’s spring assessment window, the assessment coordinator can monitor testing progress and completion.

The following 16 extracts and files are available. They are divided into four categories for easier access. The number of extracts and files varies by state.

- Student Information
  - Current Enrollment
  - First Contact Survey File
  - PNP Settings
  - PNP Settings Count
  - Roster
  - Student Roster and First Contact Survey Status
  - Parents\*
  
- Test Administration and Monitoring
  - DLM On-Demand Exited File\*\*
  - DLM On-Demand Special Circumstance File\*\*
  - DLM Test Administration Monitoring
  - TIP Access
  
- Data Management
  - Parent Portal Registration\*
  - Security Agreement Completion
  - Training Status
  - Users
  
- End of Year
  - DLM General Research File\*\*

\*In some states, Parent Portal is not available.

\*\* In some states, these extracts may only be available at the state level.

Information about the extracts and files and detailed directions on how to access them in Educator Portal are described in the EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE in the section Access Reports and Extracts.

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## KITE STUDENT PORTAL AND EDUCATOR PORTAL

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### KITE ASSESSMENT DEVICES

Ensure the most current version of Kite® Student Portal is installed on each student's testing device.

On the [Kite Suite webpage](#), a list of devices can be found that are supported for administration of the Dynamic Learning Maps® (DLM®) alternate assessment along with instructions for downloading Student Portal. Some common troubleshooting steps are in the installation instructions.

Local devices attached to these machines, such as interactive whiteboards, are also acceptable. Interactive whiteboards (brand names SMART, Promethean, etc.) may be used during assessment and attached to a supported device. The same hardware, software, and screen resolution constraints apply. The projector associated with the interactive whiteboard must project the computer screen at a resolution no lower than 1,024 × 768 pixels. For more information on assessment devices, contact the district technology personnel.

Students can use their assistive technology during assessments. The best way to ensure a particular assistive device is supported in Student Portal is to test the assistive device using a released testlet in Student Portal. The DLM Service Desk may also provide some assistance.

### ENSURE INTERNET CONNECTIVITY

An internet connection is required to deliver assessments using Student Portal. Test administrators may ask about opportunities available for assessments where an internet connection is not available (e.g., a homebound student). The district or school may provide hotspots to use when internet access is not available where a student is located. Contact the DLM Service Desk for advice when an internet connection will not be available.

### SUPPORTED BROWSERS FOR EDUCATOR PORTAL

The [Kite Requirements](#) webpage has information about choosing a supported browser that will work well with Educator Portal. For more information on district-specific browser requirements and technology, contact the technology personnel in your district.

### KITE PROCEDURES

Use the EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE for processes for procedures that take place in Kite Educator Portal (i.e., retrieving the Testlet Information Pages).

Use the TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL for procedures that take place in Student Portal like the following:

- Access Practice Activities and Released Testlets
- Start a Testlet
- Navigate in Kite Student Portal
- Take a Break During Assessment
- Complete the Testlet
- Troubleshoot in Kite Student Portal

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## GLOSSARY

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This glossary compiles definitions and acronyms relevant to assessment for the Dynamic Learning Maps® (DLM®) alternate assessment.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>card</b>	A cell on the Student View Page in the Instruction and Assessment Planner for each Essential Element and linkage level. Information about the specific Essential Element and the specific linkage level can be accessed when the user selects the card.
<b>claim</b>	English language arts (ELA) and mathematics: A broad statement about what the DLM Consortium expects students to learn and to be able to demonstrate within ELA and mathematics. Each claim is subdivided into two or more conceptual areas.
<b>conceptual area</b>	ELA and mathematics: A region within the DLM learning map containing nodes associated with related Essential Elements, representing concepts and skills that support the learning of the Essential Elements in ELA and mathematics. Conceptual areas are composed of clusters of connected concepts and skills and serve as models of how students may acquire and organize their content knowledge. Conceptual areas are considered subparts of the overall claims.
<b>connection</b>	ELA and mathematics: The relationship between two nodes in the DLM maps. Connections are illustrated with arrows in the maps.
<b>core idea</b>	Science: The key organizing principles in science and are taught and learned over multiple grades at increasing levels of depth and sophistication.  For science, within each domain, three or four core ideas have been selected to use for instruction and assessment. Each of the core ideas is narrowed further into topics.

<b>display enhancements</b>	Options that change the testlet appearance on the student’s device screen, including magnification, overlay color, invert color choice, and contrast color.
<b>domain</b>	Science: The major science content areas assessed are domains. The domains assessed across all grade bands are physical science, life science, and Earth and space science.
<b>Educator Portal</b>	Educator Portal is a secure, web-based application designed to aid teachers and administrative users in the administration of assessments, including student enrollment and monitoring or tracking results. Users can access Educator Portal using any supported browser via <a href="https://educator.kiteaai.org/">https://educator.kiteaai.org/</a> . For information on working within Educator Portal, access the DATA MANAGEMENT MANUAL and the EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE on the DLM website.
<b>engagement activity</b>	An activity at the beginning of a testlet that describes a scenario, taps prior knowledge or experience, or introduces the concept to be addressed. In ELA reading testlets, the first reading of the text often serves as the engagement activity. In mathematics and science, the engagement activity provides context for the items. The engagement activity for some science testlets at the upper linkage levels include a short video without audio.
<b>Essential Elements</b>	Essential Elements are the content standards used for assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Essential Elements are reduced in depth, breadth, and the level of complexity, and they build a bridge from the content in the grade-level standards to academic expectations. They are specific statements of knowledge and skills linked to the grade-level expectations identified in K–12 grade-level standards for ELA and mathematics. Essential Elements in science are linked to the National Research Council’s Framework for K–12.

**First Contact Survey**

A survey used to collect background information about students who are eligible for the DLM alternate assessments. The survey goes beyond basic demographic information and includes questions on communication, assistive technology devices, motor and sensory impairments, and academic performance.

In the optional instructionally embedded assessment window, data gathered from the core questions from the survey are used to **recommend** the linkage level for each ELA and mathematics Essential Element. In addition to the core questions, data gathered from the science questions are used to **recommend** the linkage level for each science Essential Element. Data gathered from the core questions plus data from the writing questions are used to **recommend** the linkage level for the writing testlet.

In the spring assessment window, data gathered from the core questions are used to **assign** the linkage level for the student's first ELA and mathematics testlets.

Data gathered from the core questions plus data from the science questions are used to **assign** the linkage level of the student's first science testlet.

In the spring window, data gathered from the core questions, plus data from the writing questions, are used to **assign** the linkage level for the writing testlet, instead of performance of previously completed testlets.

**initialization**

The process by which a student's existing information is used to determine the point in the DLM learning map model where the student enters the assessment for the first time.

**Instruction and Assessment Planner**

A part in Educator Portal where test administrators perform assessment functions for a student during the optional instructionally embedded assessment window. Functions include selecting an Essential Element and linkage level for instruction and subsequent testing. Most assessment data about the student is provided in the Instruction and Assessment Planner during this window, including a mastery of a tested Essential Element at a linkage level. Score results are not used for the end-of-year Individual Student Score Reports.



<b>instructionally embedded assessment</b>	Occurs during the optional instructionally embedded assessment window in the fall and winter months where instruction and assessment are closely integrated with assessment functions being performed throughout instruction. Functions include educator-selected Essential Elements and linkage levels for instruction and subsequent testing. Most assessment data about the student is provided in the Instruction and Assessment Planner during this window, including a mastery indication for a tested Essential Element at a linkage level. Although a mastery indication is provided, score results do not impact end-of-year Individual Student Score Reports.
<b>Kite® Student Portal</b>	<p>Student Portal is a secure testing platform used by students to take testlets. Once launched, Student Portal prevents students from accessing unauthorized webpages or applications during testing.</p> <p>All students taking the DLM alternate assessment will have unique accounts in Kite Student Portal. Test administrators do not have accounts in Student Portal.</p> <p>In addition to operational testing in the Student Portal, practice activities and released testlets can be administered using Student Portal. The login credentials for the practice activities and released testlets are unique to each one. Access the <a href="#">TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL</a> for more information about Student Portal.</p>
<b>linkage level</b>	<p>ELA and mathematics: A small section of the DLM learning map model containing one or more nodes that represent critical concepts or skills needed to learn the Essential Element. ELA and mathematics each have five linkage levels: Initial Precursor, Distal Precursor, Proximal Precursor, Target, and Successor.</p> <p>Science: An incremental level of complexity toward the learning target where an assessment was developed for the science Essential Elements. Science has three linkage levels: Initial, Precursor, and Target.</p> <p>Linkage levels for an Essential Element are always related directly to grade-level content standards but at different levels of cognitive complexity. The Target level is most closely related to the grade-level expectation.</p>

<b>materials</b>	Any objects, manipulatives, and tools used during an assessment. Materials Collection lists are specific to a window for each subject. The lists are found on each state’s DLM website under Educator Resources.
<b>node</b>	ELA and mathematics: A representation in the DLM learning map model of an individual skill or conceptual understanding identified in the research in ELA and mathematics.
<b>Personal Learning Profile</b>	A collective term used to describe a student’s personal needs and preferences settings entered in the PNP Profile in addition to information about the student entered in the First Contact Survey in Educator Portal.
<b>Personal Needs and Preferences (PNP) Profile</b>	Student-specific information that informs Kite Student Portal about an individual student’s personal needs and preferences for each testlet. The PNP Profile includes information the system needs to make the student’s user interface in Student Portal compatible with their accessibility needs. The PNP Profile includes information about display enhancements, language and braille, and audio and environmental supports. Educators who know the student provide the information in the profile found in Educator Portal.
<b>plan</b>	The test administrator creates a plan in the Instruction and Assessment Planner in Educator Portal only during the optional instructionally embedded assessment window. A plan includes an Essential Element, a linkage level, and a testlet for ELA, mathematics, and science.
<b>released testlets</b>	A released testlet is a publicly available sample DLM assessment. Released testlets may be used by students and teachers as examples or opportunities for practice. Released testlets are developed using the same standards and methods used to develop testlets that are used in DLM operational assessments. New released testlets are added periodically.
<b>State Assessment Administrator (SAA)</b>	An Educator Portal role assigned to staff at the state education agency who have the highest level of access and permissions in Kite Educator Portal for an external user. An SAA can transfer students between districts, assign the District Test Coordinator role, inactivate users, and have access to all student reports and extracts.

<b>state education agency</b>	A state department of education.
<b>stem</b>	The beginning part of the item that presents a problem to solve or an item to which a student responds. The stem may also include other relevant information in the item. A multiple-choice item is a common example in the DLM alternate assessment, consisting of a stem and a set of response options from which a student chooses.
<b>Student Activity Table</b>	<p>A page in the Instruction and Assessment Planner in Educator Portal. The Student Activity Table provides an at-a-glance overview for all students rostered to the test administrator in the subjects in which the students are being tested during the optional instructionally embedded assessment window. The data in the Student Activity Table populates based on the test administrator’s actions on the Student View Page for each student (i.e., how many testlets were administered).</p> <p>The table also includes three icons providing easy access to the First Contact Survey, PNP Profile, and the student’s credentials.</p>
<b>Student View Page</b>	A page in the Instruction and Assessment Planner in Educator Portal that displays details about one student at a time for each Essential Element and linkage level. During the optional instructionally embedded assessment window, test administrators use the Student View Page for several instruction and assessment actions for each student (i.e., creating a plan and assigning a testlet). The system will display information about the student’s testing progress and will indicate whether the student achieved mastery of an Essential Element at the linkage level tested.
<b>technology-enhanced items</b>	Computer-delivered test items that require a specialized interaction, such as select and drag. A technology-enhanced item is any item that is not answered using direct selection. This item type is only used at upper linkage levels.

**testlet** A short assessment that begins with an engagement activity and include three to nine items, depending on the subject. Together the items increase the instructional relevance of the assessment and provide a better estimate of a student’s knowledge, skills, and understandings than can be achieved by a single assessment item. Each testlet assesses only one Essential Element, except for the writing testlet, which assesses all writing Essential Elements together in one testlet.

Testlets are delivered one at a time in each subject. They are either teacher-administered or computer-delivered and they are adaptive, except for the writing testlet, which is always delivered last and its linkage level assignment is not based on performance of previous testlets. More specific information is found in the TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL.

**Testlet  
Information Page  
(TIP)**

A PDF that is unique to each testlet and provides specific information to guide the test administrator in delivering the assessment.

The TIP for each testlet lists the materials needed or describes the attributes of the materials needed specific to a testlet.

The materials listed in the TIP are especially needed for the teacher-administered testlets at the Initial and Distal Precursor linkage levels in ELA and mathematics, and the Initial linkage level for science.

The TIP for testlets at the Initial level for science has picture response cards that must be printed before testing. Best practice is to print them in color.

Computer-delivered testlets require fewer materials than the teacher administered testlets.

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## STATE APPENDICES

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### DOCUMENT HISTORY

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NOTE: Page numbers are valid ONLY for the date and version noted.  
They may change in future versions.

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Date	Section Name/Summary of Changes	Starting Page
06/30/2023	Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in an email or chat	2
06/30/2023	Proctor role no longer available in Educator Portal for DLM alternate assessments	11
06/30/2023	First Contact Survey	26

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## COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES INCLUDING PENNSYLVANIA RELIGIOUS OPT OUT PROCEDURES

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### COMMUNICATING WITH FAMILIES ABOUT THE PASA DLM TESTING WINDOW

PASA Assessment Coordinators are responsible for communicating important test-related information to families including but not limited to the dates of testing. Parent Notification Letter templates are available in English and Spanish on the PA DLM website. In addition, families may be provided with supplemental resources including the DLM Parent Information brochure also available in English and Spanish on the DLM website.

### RELIGIOUS OPT-OUT PROCEDURES IN PENNSYLVANIA

Participation in statewide assessments is a federal and state requirement for all students. Chapter

4 of Title 22 of the Pa. Code (22 Pa. code 4.4) provides for the right of any parent/guardian to excuse his/her child from the state assessment if, upon inspection of the testing materials, they find the assessment to conflict with their religious beliefs. The process must be initiated by the parent, not the school. This is the only regulatory allowance for a parent/guardian to excuse their child from the statewide assessments. A religious exemption cannot be denied; however, it can only be granted if all of the following steps are completed.

1. The student must be enrolled for testing so there is an official record of eligibility for the PA Alternate System of Assessment (PASA). The enrollment record is also needed so the district (assessment coordinator) can document officially that the student was not assessed due to religious beliefs. A religious exemption cannot be granted until after the parent/guardian(s) have reviewed the vendor released examples of testlets.

2. The Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) vendor produces publicly released PASA ‘testlets’, which serve as a tool for parents to view the type of content assessed on the PASA DLM. The testlet examples can be accessed as follows:

- [English Language Arts testlets](#)
- [Mathematics testlets](#)
- [Science testlets](#)

The parent/guardian must view the publicly released test materials on school grounds with the PASA Assessment Coordinator or designee. It is strongly recommended that a school administrator/PASA Assessment Coordinator discuss the PASA DLM design with the parent/guardian, outlining key features of the assessment that allow students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to show what they know and can do (e.g., one-on-one administration procedure, adaptive design, online and teacher delivered accommodations, instructionally aligned, etc.). The DLM Parent Information Brochure can be accessed in English [DLM Parent Information - YE & Science Only \(dynamiclearningmaps.org\)](https://dynamiclearningmaps.org/DLM-Parent-Information-IE-Science-Only) or Spanish [ExternalComms Parents YE SciOnly\(es-MX\).pdf \(dynamiclearningmaps.org\)](https://dynamiclearningmaps.org/ExternalComms-Parents-IE-SciOnly(es-MX).pdf).

3. If after reviewing the assessment the parent/guardian(s) do not want their student to participate, they must write a letter to the Chief School Administrator requesting a religious exemption. If a service provider receives written notification from a parent requesting a religious exemption, the letter must be shared with the sending Local Education Agency when applicable.

4. Prior to the close of the testing window, the Assessment Coordinator must enter a Special Circumstance Code to indicate the reason for non-participation. Students who do not participate due to a religious opt out count negatively against the school's participation rate in school accountability reporting.

#### PARENT OPT-OUT (NOT BASED ON RELIGIOUS BELIEFS)

There is no allowance for this type of exclusion in Pennsylvania regulation. Even though Pennsylvania does not recognize parental refusal as an allowable exclusion, if a parent/guardian refuses to have their child participate in the assessment and does not provide a reason in accordance with Chapter 4 rules, the IEP team must continue to complete section IV of the IEP and enroll the student in the KITE portal. Prior to the end of the testing window, the PASA Assessment Coordinator must follow the procedure for non-assessed students by entering the appropriate special circumstance code. Students who are non-assessed because of “**parent**

**refusal”** count negatively against the school’s participation rate in school accountability reporting.



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## PASA DLM TEST SECURITY AFFIDAVIT FOR SUPPORT STAFF AND RELATED SERVICE PERSONNEL

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This document serves as the PASA DLM Test Security Affidavit for individuals that may be present during test administration (i.e., paraprofessional, interpreter, behavior specialist, related service personnel) and do not have an active role in the PASA DLM Kite portal. All PASA assessors are required to complete an online test security affidavit via the DLM Kite Educator portal prior to accessing student assessments.

This document identifies specific actions which are inappropriate and violate, in spirit and intent, a secure statewide alternate assessment. It is provided in coordination with security procedures put forth by the Pennsylvania State Board of Education and published in the *Pennsylvania School Code* and the *PASA DLM Test Administration Manual*. Failure to adhere to the following test security procedures may result in disciplinary action and/or revocation of the teaching certificate by the Pennsylvania State Department of Education:

1. To disclose secure test items or student responses before, during, or after the assessment.
2. To review, read, or look at test items or student responses before administering the assessment, except under conditions outlined in the *PASA DLM Test Administration Manual*.
3. To give students answers to test questions using verbal or nonverbal cues before, during, or after administering the assessment.
4. To alter student responses.
5. To alter the test procedures stated in the *PASA DLM Test Administration Manual*.
6. To allow students to use additional aids other than what the Accessibility Manual allows.
7. To have secure test materials in one's personal possession outside of the allowable procedures outlined in the *PASA DLM Test Administration Manual*.
8. To leave secure test materials in non-secure locations and/or unattended by professional staff.
9. To take or post pictures of PASA test materials on a social media or other public sites.

10. To fail to report a test security violation.

By signing below, I certify that I have read the above policy and agree to abide by established *PASA* test security procedures.

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Name

Date

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District

Position

\*The signed copy of this form must be kept on file by the *PASA* Assessment Coordinator and be available upon request.

Revised 2023

## English Learner (EL) – PA Specific Guidance

Students in their first year in the United States are not required to participate in state assessments for English language arts (ELA). They are, however, required to participate in the mathematics and science assessments. This includes the PASA DLM. For any language other than English, an interpreter may be used to present the PASA during the first three years that a student is categorized as an EL in U.S. schools. It is the responsibility of the school to secure a language translator if needed.

For PASA DLM eligible students in the first year in the U.S., the PASA Assessment Coordinator must enroll and roster the student in ELA. PASA ACs should use a special circumstance code of “Other” as the reason for non-participation.