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 publication date will also be updated. A summary of changes is included in the Appendix under Document History.

A special thanks to our state partners who provided helpful feedback and to Pat Almond for her assistance with conceptualizing accessibility for the Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment System. We are grateful for everyone’s time and efforts to improve this document.
**FINDING HELP**
When the information in this manual and resources from your state Dynamic Learning Maps® webpage ([www.dynamiclearningmaps.org](http://www.dynamiclearningmaps.org)) do not lead to solutions, these contacts can provide additional support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For these topics:</th>
<th>Contact:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Kite® Student Portal installation</td>
<td>Local technology representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• General computer support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Internet availability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Display resolution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Issues with sound, headphones, speakers, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How to use Student Portal and Educator Portal</td>
<td>Local assessment coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Training requirements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assessment questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assessment scheduling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Test invalidation requirements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student IEP requirements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Test window dates, extensions, requirements, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Test resets (may take up to 72 hours)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Data issues (rosters, enrollment, etc.)</td>
<td>Local assessment coordinator or data manager</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*When contacting the DLM® Service Desk*

- **Do not send any Personally Identifiable Information** (PII) for a student via email. 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. Please check with your assessment coordinator to find out what student information can be legally emailed in your state.

- **Do send**:
  - your contact information (email address and name)
  - your school name (include the district if contacting state-level personnel)
  - error messages, including the testlet number if applicable to the problem

HINT: Print this page and keep it handy!
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OVERVIEW

AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE

The ACCESSIBILITY MANUAL for the Dynamic Learning Maps® (DLM®) alternate assessment provides guidance to state leaders, district staff, test administrators, and Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams in the selection and use of the accessibility supports available in the DLM system.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Additional procedural information on manipulatives, braille testlets, language translation, and sign language is provided in the TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL and the EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE, which are available on the DLM website at http://dynamiclearningmaps.org.

For instructions on using Educator Portal to select the supports appropriate for each student, see the EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE.

WHAT’S NEW IN THIS VERSION

Information about these topics has been added or enhanced in this version.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Starting Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Updates to section Changing PNP Profile Settings During Testing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

To learn about updates to test administration resources such as this manual, subscribe to Test Updates on the DLM website (https://dynamiclearningmaps.org/test-updates).
ABOUT THE DYNAMIC LEARNING MAPS ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The DLM Alternate Assessment System assesses what students with the most significant cognitive disabilities know and can do in the DLM-assessed subject areas in grades 3-8 and high school. The department of education in each state determines which subjects and grades to assess. The DLM system provides accessibility by design and is guided by the core beliefs that all students are to have access to challenging, grade-level content and that test administrators must adhere to the highest levels of integrity in providing instruction and administering assessments based on this challenging content.

The DLM Alternate Assessment System includes computer-based assessments and an administrative application to manage student information. The assessments can be administered on a variety of devices.

Understanding how the DLM alternate assessment is designed for accessibility and how accessibility supports can be customized helps test administrators determine which supports are needed for each student.
ACCESSIBILITY BY DESIGN

ACCESSIBLE CONTENT

Accessible content is essential to student success. The Dynamic Learning Maps® (DLM®) Alternate Assessment Consortium has created accessible content by developing testlets at various complexity levels, creating item-writing guidelines based on Universal Design for Learning, and using an appropriate vocabulary level. Universal Design for Learning is a scientifically valid framework for guiding education practice that (a) provides flexibility in the ways students respond, demonstrate knowledge and skills, and engage with the content and (b) reduces barriers in instruction, provides appropriate challenges, supports, and maintains high achievement expectations for all students, including students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and students who have limited English proficiency (Higher Education Opportunity Act, 2008). Universal Design for Learning is a framework that is critical to understanding how students with the most significant cognitive disabilities can achieve success within content standards.

DLM technology enriches the interaction between the student and the content by using a special user interface called Kite® Suite. Students are administered grade-level assessments with an appropriate balance of academic challenge and accessibility to the content. The First Contact survey is a collection of background information about students who are eligible for the DLM alternate assessment. The survey goes beyond basic demographic information and includes questions on topics such as communication, assistive technology devices, motor and sensory impairments, and academic performance. The test administrator enters information in the survey about each of these for each student in Educator Portal. Some questions from the First Contact survey are used to determine a student’s entry point, or initialization, into the assessment. This is the student’s first testlet.

Items in the DLM alternate assessment are grouped into testlets. A testlet contains three to nine items, or questions, aligned to one or more Essential Element. Essential Elements are specific statements of knowledge and skills that are linked to each state’s content standards. Testlets allow flexibility in the content complexity level based on the content needs of each student. Items in the DLM alternate assessment are built to show the relationships between the knowledge and skills necessary to reach the Essential Elements. Information gathered in the First Contact survey and ongoing student performance determine which linkage level(s) of complexity are most accessible and appropriate for each student.

Accessible Content for ELA and Mathematics

Both English language arts (ELA) and mathematics have a fully developed learning map model. Those maps contain thousands of nodes that are representations of an individual skill or conceptual understanding identified in the research in ELA and mathematics.
For each ELA and mathematics Essential Element, the DLM alternate assessment provides testlets at several different levels of complexity called linkage levels. ELA and mathematics have five linkage levels per Essential Element. Linkage levels are a small section of the DLM map containing one or more nodes that represent critical concepts or skills needed to learn the Essential Element. Target-level testlets are developed based on these nodes. Then, multiple pathways on the map are carefully inspected to identify nodes that link to the Target linkage level, both preceding and extending beyond it. Linkage levels identify significant milestones en route to the knowledge and skills described by the Essential Element, indicating a student’s performance in relationship to the grade-level target.

The least complex linkage level is called Initial Precursor. Testlets developed at the Initial Precursor linkage level often reflect foundational nodes in the DLM map, which are skills and understandings necessary for learning subsequent academic content (e.g., “focus attention”). Testlets at this level are typically intended for students who do not yet have symbolic communication. Initial Precursor testlets are administered by the test administrator, who observes the student’s behavior as directed by the instructions within the testlet and then records the student’s responses 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 map that extend from the Target linkage level to the Initial Precursor linkage level, as demonstrated in Figure 1.

![Diagram of linkage levels]

**Figure 1.** Linkage levels determine testlet development contents.

**Note:** IP = Initial Precursor; DP = Distal Precursor; PP = Proximal Precursor; T = Target; S = Successor
Finally, testlets at the Successor linkage level give students the opportunity to take the next step beyond the expectations described by the Essential Element.

**ACCESSIBLE CONTENT FOR SCIENCE**

The science Essential Elements are the science learning targets for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Unlike for ELA and mathematics, the learning map model for science is not fully developed. Therefore, some differences occur between science and ELA and mathematics. The science standards are described in grade-band performance expectations by the end of each grade band:

- 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

Each science Essential Element has three linkage levels that indicate a student’s performance in relationship to that grade-level target.

The Target linkage level is the highest linkage level in science. Testlets at the Target linkage level are written at the level of the Essential Element. Science does not have a Successor linkage level at this time.

The other two linkage levels are lower in depth, breadth, and complexity than the Target linkage level. The Initial linkage level is the least complex level, and testlets developed at the Initial linkage level often reflect foundational aspects of each state’s content standards. These aspects include skills and understandings necessary for learning subsequent academic content (e.g., “focus attention”). Testlets at the Initial linkage level are typically intended for students who do not yet have symbolic communication. They are administered by the test administrator who observes the student’s behavior, as directed by the instructions within the testlet, and then records the student’s responses in Student Portal.

The Precursor linkage level is between the Initial linkage level and the Target linkage level. The Precursor linkage level identifies significant milestones en route to the knowledge and skills described by the Essential Element, indicating a student’s performance relative to the grade-level target.

Information gathered in the First Contact survey and ongoing student performance determine which linkage level(s) are most accessible and appropriate for each student.

See your state’s webpage to determine if your state tests in DLM science.

**ACCESSIBLE DELIVERY**

Testlet structure differs slightly between subject areas based on research of effective instructional practices for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Each
testlet begins with an engagement activity. Engagement activities are designed to motivate students, provide a context, and activate prior knowledge.

**ELA ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

Within ELA, reading testlets are designed around texts that are adapted from grade-level themes. The texts’ content provides an appropriate level of challenge but is reduced in depth, breadth, and complexity compared to grade-level texts. The DLM texts are written to support assessment of the specific knowledge and skills described in the nodes.

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 appropriately embedded items within the text as well as items placed at the end of the text when necessary. Embedded items reduce cognitive load and reliance on long-term memory.

During writing assessments, the test administrator follows a standardized procedure in which the student selects and writes about a topic. A series of screens in Student Portal lead the student and test administrator through various stages of the writing process. Writing testlets are available at two levels of complexity: emergent and conventional writing. In both types of writing testlets, students work outside of Student Portal, using orthography-based materials that they use for writing in everyday instruction. Students may use standard pens, pencils, keyboards, or other materials that offer access to all 26 letters of the alphabet. The test administrator observes the student’s writing and responds to items about their writing in the testlet in Student Portal. See the TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL for full descriptions.

**MATHEMATICS ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

Mathematics testlets start with an engagement activity 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 student understanding of the targeted content.

**SCIENCE ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

Science testlets may be designed around a science story featuring an experiment or classroom activity that is presented twice, with items embedded within the second presentation of the activity and/or at the end of the second presentation. Shorter science stories simply provide a context for the items. In testlets with a shorter science story, the science story is presented once, and all items appear at the conclusion of the activity. Science testlets at the Precursor linkage level may also be designed around a short video (up to 30 seconds), with items presented after the video has been viewed.
See your state’s webpage at [www.dynamiclearningmaps.org](http://www.dynamiclearningmaps.org) to determine if your state tests in DLM science.

**TESTLET ITEM DESIGN**

Testlets are delivered and responses are collected in two general ways. Most testlets are designed for direct student interaction via computer. Information the test administrator enters in the First Contact survey determines the testlet format the student receives. Most students can interact with the computer independently. The student is allowed to use special devices such as alternate keyboards, touch screens, or switches. In some instances, the student may need support from the test administrator to interact with the computer. For example, a technology-enhanced item may require a physical manipulation that is difficult for the student to manage. While most items are in a multiple-choice format, some testlets at upper linkage levels use technology-enhanced items on a limited basis. These items require certain types of skills, such as sorting or matching. Screenshot of item types in computer-delivered testlets are shown in Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4, and Figure 5.

**ITEM TYPES**

![Which is a circle?](image)

*Figure 2. A screenshot of images as response options in a single-select multiple-choice item. The student is to select the image the text describes.*
Figure 3. A screenshot of symbols and descriptive words in a matching item where two lists are shown. The student is to match a symbol from the list on the left to the descriptive words in the list on the right.

Figure 4. A screenshot of images in a sorting item where the student is to sort images into categories. The student selects an image and drags it into the appropriate box.
Figure 5. A screenshot of a sentence where the student is to respond to the item by selecting the appropriate word from the three outlined words presented in the passage.

After the student makes a selection, the outline around the word, phrase, or sentence becomes bold and is highlighted in transparent yellow, as shown in the example above.

Some testlets are designed so test administrators can administer them outside of Student Portal with step-by-step guidance provided in the testlet (see Figure 6). For these testlets, the test administrator, rather than the student, records student responses in the testlet in Student Portal.

Figure 6. Educator directions in a teacher-administered testlet.

CUSTOMIZATION FOR EACH STUDENT

The Personal Needs and Preferences (PNP) Profile and the First Contact survey are collections of information about a student entered in Educator Portal by the student’s test administrator. Once the test administrator submits the information, the system analyzes the data, using a complex algorithm to determine the best level of complexity, or linkage level, for the student’s first testlet. The system uses the PNP Profile settings
chosen by the test administrator to customize each student’s assessment experience. The test administrator determines which accessibility supports to include (e.g., magnification), and which assessment form to deliver in Student Portal (e.g., braille).

Since the PNP Profile settings in Educator Portal activate the appropriate system accessibility supports, best practice is for test administrators to complete the PNP Profile before the assessment begins. When necessary, the test administrator can adjust the PNP Profile settings as a student’s needs change, even during an assessment window or in the middle of a testlet.

**CHANGING PNP PROFILE SETTINGS DURING TESTING**

To change a PNP Profile setting during testing, follow this process:

1. The test administrator exits the testlet by using the **Exit Does Not Save** button. Contact the district assessment coordinator for direction if the use of **Exit Does Not Save** is not allowed in your state.

2. The test administrator logs into Educator Portal, goes to Settings and View Students, selects the PNP Profile, and selects or deselects the desired support settings.

3. The test administrator must save the new selection(s) in the PNP Profile before exiting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support</th>
<th>How soon does the change appear in the testlet after being updated in the student’s PNP Profile?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Magnification</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overlay Color</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invert Color Choice</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast Color</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoken Audio</td>
<td>Overnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braille, both UEB and EBAE</td>
<td>Overnight, if available for the testlet at the linkage level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate Form-Visual Impairment</td>
<td>Overnight, if available for the testlet at the linkage level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-switch system</td>
<td>Overnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-switch system</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualized manipulatives</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculator</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HINT: Braille testlets and Alternate Form – Visual Impairment testlets are not available for every Essential Element at every linkage level. However, standard forms of testlets are always available for every Essential Element at every linkage level. Therefore, if either a braille or an Alternate Form – Visual Impairment form was selected in the PNP Profile but is unavailable for the particular Essential Element or linkage level being tested, the testlet delivered will be a standard form. The test administrator is responsible for making the information accessible to the student using the methods that have been used during normal classroom instruction.

The supports in the PNP Profile are listed under five tabs: Summary, Display Enhancements, Language & Braille, Audio & Environment Support, and Other Supports. Settings in the PNP Profile that are not relevant to the DLM alternate assessment are deactivated and grayed out in the system, and they cannot be selected. After the available and appropriate supports are selected and saved, the test administrator may check the Summary tab to see the current profile settings (see Figure 7).

![Figure 7. Screenshot of accessibility Summary tab. Data are for a fictional student.](image)

The test administrator completes the First Contact survey prior to assessment administration. The Kite system uses the data to determine the student’s initial placement into the assessment, in other words, the best linkage level to deliver the first testlet when the assessment window opens. Instructions for how to complete the First
Contact survey are in the EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE. Additionally, the helplet video, Personal Learning Profile (https://dynamiclearningmaps.org/erp/videos), describes how to complete the First Contact survey. A testlet cannot be delivered to a student until the First Contact survey has been completed and submitted. If not completed before the assessment window opens, the first testlet will not arrive for 24 hours.
SIX STEPS TO CUSTOMIZE DYNAMIC LEARNING MAPS ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS

This section presents a six-step process for IEP teams, general and special education educators, test administrators, and district-level assessment staff to use in the selection, administration, and evaluation of the accessibility supports used in Student Portal by students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

- Step 1: Include Eligible Students in the DLM Alternate Assessment
- Step 2: Learn About the Accessibility Supports and What the DLM Alternate Assessment Provides
- Step 3: Discuss and Select Appropriate Supports: Considerations for IEP Teams
- Step 4: Select and View Supports in the Educator Portal
- Step 5: Prepare for the Assessment: Using the Chosen Accessibility Supports
- Step 6: Evaluate the Accessibility Supports Used at the end of the Assessment window, after all testlets have been administered.

Steps 1-3 are intended to assist IEP teams in determining the appropriate accessibility supports for eligible students, and Steps 4-6 are a guide for educators and test administrators for choosing, using, and evaluating the selected supports. These six steps are explained in detail in the following sections.

STEP 1: INCLUDE ELIGIBLE STUDENTS IN THE DLM ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

PARTICIPATION IN A STATE ASSESSMENT

With legislation’s focus on accountability and inclusion of all students comes the drive to ensure equal access to grade-level content standards. Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are included in state and district accountability systems in order to receive the benefits gained from participation, such as improved instruction, higher expectations, and involvement in educational reforms (Thurlow, Ysseldyke, & Elliott, 2002). Several important laws require students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to participate in standards-based instruction and assessment initiatives. These include federal laws such as No Child Left Behind of 2001, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA), and the Every Student Succeeds Act, which went into effect in 2017.

PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities have one or more disabilities that significantly affect intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. Adaptive behavior is behavior that is essential to live independently and function safely in daily life. The Dynamic Learning Maps® (DLM®) alternate assessment is designed for students
with the most significant cognitive disabilities who require significant instruction and support both in and out of the classroom.

The DLM alternate assessment provides three general participation criteria and all three must be met.

- The student has a significant cognitive disability. Review of student records indicates one or more disabilities that significantly affect intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior.
- The student is primarily instructed using the Essential Elements as content standards. Goals and instruction listed in the student’s IEP are linked to the enrolled grade-level DLM Essential Elements and address the knowledge and skills that are appropriate and challenging for this student.
- The student requires extensive, direct, and individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum. The student requires extensive, repeated, and individualized instruction and support that is not temporary or transient, and the student uses substantially adapted materials and individualized methods of accessing information in alternative ways to acquire, maintain, generalize, demonstrate, and transfer skills across multiple settings.

The following considerations are not allowable (or acceptable) for determining participation in the DLM alternate assessment.

- a disability category or label
- poor attendance or extended absences
- native language, social, cultural, or economic difference
- expected poor performance on the general education assessment
- academic and other services student receives
- educational environment or instructional setting
- percent of time receiving special education
- English learner status
- low reading level or achievement level
- anticipated student’s disruptive behavior
- impact of student results on accountability system
- administrator decision
- anticipated emotional duress
- need for supports (e.g., Assistive Technology/Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) to participate in the assessment process

Individual states may set additional eligibility criteria to establish which students are eligible to take the DLM alternate assessment. For additional guidance for IEP teams in this area, refer to the state department of education.
STEP 2: LEARN ABOUT THE ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORTS

ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORTS PROVIDED IN THE DLM ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

This section identifies the accessibility supports available for students taking the DLM alternate assessment and distinguishes among accessibility supports that (a) can be utilized by selecting online supports via the PNP Profile, (b) require additional support materials, and (c) are provided by the test administrator outside the system. Table 1 shows which supports fall under each of these categories. Each support is described in the following section. If the state requires documentation about certain accessibility supports in the student’s IEP, refer to the State Appendix (if provided) for more information, or contact the state department of education.

- Decisions about which supports to include in the DLM alternate assessment were made using results from more than 50,000 First Contact survey responses, feedback from national sensory impairment experts who also have expertise in this population of students, and lessons learned from test administration observation studies.

Prior to administering the DLM alternate assessment, test administrators provide information about the accessibility needs of each assessed student. The Kite® system stores this information and uses some of it to activate certain supports.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessibility Supports of the DLM Assessment System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category 1</strong> Settings in the PNP Profile that activate supports within Student Portal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overlay color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invert color choice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contrast color</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spoken Audio</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Category 2</strong> Settings in the PNP Profile that require supports or materials in addition to those within Student Portal</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**SUPPORT CATEGORIES**

**Category 1 settings in the PNP Profile activate supports within Student Portal**

Online supports include magnification, overlay color, invert color choice, contrast color, and Spoken Audio. Directions detailing how to select the PNP Profile supports are found in Step 4: Select and View Supports in the Kite System.

Test administrators are advised to try out the supports in advance to make sure they are compatible and provide the best access for students. See the Guide to Practice Activities and Released Testlets on the DLM website (http://www.dynamiclearningmaps.org) for more information (e.g., the user names and passwords for the practice demo testlets). Released testlets are similar to real testlets. They are selected from a variety of Essential Elements and linkage levels across grades 3-8 and high school. New released testlets are added periodically.

- **Magnification**: Allows test administrators to choose the degree of screen magnification during assessment. Test administrators can choose between a magnification of 2x, 3x, 4x, or 5x. Without magnification, the font is Report School, 22 point. Scrolling may be required when the level of magnification is increased because the entire item will no longer be visible on the screen. Scrolling will vary according to the level of magnification, the amount of content in the item, and the size of the screen.
- **Overlay color**: The background color of the assessment. The default color is white. Test administrators may select from the alternate colors of blue, green, pink, gray, and yellow. Practice demo testlets have specific presets, but more options are provided in the PNP Profile and actual live testlets.
- **Invert color choice**: Makes the background color black and the font white. Images display with a white background.
- **Contrast color**: Allows test administrators to choose from color schemes for the background and font.
- **Spoken Audio**: Synthetic Spoken Audio (read aloud with highlighting) is read from left to right and top to bottom. Three preferences are available for Spoken Audio: text only, text and graphics, and nonvisual (this preference also describes page layout for students who are blind or have visual impairments).

```
HINT: When using Spoken Audio, do not choose yellow for overlay color in the PNP Profile, as the Spoken Audio feature highlights the text in yellow, making it illegible to the student.
```

Screenshots showing these supports begin in the Demonstration of Personal Needs and Preferences Supports: What Students Will See section on page 35 of this manual.
Category 2 settings in the PNP Profile require additional supports or materials

These supports include braille, switch system preferences, and the use of special supports and materials and typically require prior planning and setup. The test administrator selects these supports in the PNP Profile. Practice activities and released testlets with supports are available through several demo student accounts. See the Guide to Practice Activities and Released Testlets or the TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL for a list of demo logins for practice testlets.

- Braille: The DLM Alternate Assessment System supplies braille forms for some testlets at the Target linkage level. These forms are available in either uncontracted Unified English Braille (UEB) or English Braille American Edition (EBAE), depending on what the test administrator selects in the student’s PNP Profile, if the state permits both. DLM braille forms also include Nemeth code for mathematics, as needed.

The DLM alternate assessment is designed to assess a student’s knowledge, skills, and understandings of the Essential Elements, not the student’s ability to use braille. Braille testlets are for students who read braille proficiently. When braille is appropriate for a student, the DLM Consortium recommends choosing both braille (either UEB or EBAE) and Alternate Form—Visual Impairment supports in the student’s PNP Profile. Braille is not to be selected for emerging braille readers. Other options described below, such as alternate forms, are also suitable for a student with a visual impairment who does not read braille.

See Table 2 below for information about the availability of braille forms for each subject, grade, and linkage level during the spring assessment window.

Table 2
Availability of Uncontracted Braille Forms during the Spring Assessment Window by Subject, Grade Level, and Linkage Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Linkage Levels</th>
<th>Window</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELA and mathematics</td>
<td>3–5</td>
<td>Target and Successor</td>
<td>The fall and the spring assessment windows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA and mathematics</td>
<td>6–8 and HS</td>
<td>Proximal Precursor, Target, and Successor</td>
<td>The fall and the spring assessment windows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>3–8 and HS</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td>The spring assessment window only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Alternate Form—Visual Impairment: For a student who is blind and does not read braille or who has a significant visual impairment, the test administrator selects Alternate Form—Visual Impairment under the Other tab in the PNP Profile. The alternate form of the testlet, if available, will have the letters BVI (Blind Visual Impairment) in the testlet name, in the test ticket, and in Student Portal (e.g., SP BVI
SCI MS.PS1-2 P 10455). If a BVI form is not available for the testlet, the system will deliver a standard form to the student. The accompanying Testlet Information Page (TIP) for that testlet will provide information about how to make appropriate adaptations for the student.

- Single-switch system: This support is activated using one switch and a switch interface that emulates the Enter key on the keyboard. In the PNP Profile, test administrators can set scan speed, indicate if scanning is to begin automatically when the page appears, and select the number of times the scan cycle repeats before stopping.

- Two-switch system: This system does not require activation in the PNP Profile. Two switches and a switch interface are used to emulate the Tab key to move between choices and the Enter key to select the choice when highlighted.

- Individualized manipulatives: Students may use familiar manipulatives (e.g., abacus, unit cubes, interlocking blocks, counters, linking letters). Refer to the TIP for constraints for a specific testlet.

- Calculator: Students may use a calculator on mathematics testlets unless it interferes with the construct of the testlet. The TIP for each mathematics testlet will specify whether a calculator is permitted.

**Category 3 settings in PNP Profile all require supports provided by the test administrator outside of Kite Student Portal**

Supports offered outside of Student Portal require actions by the test administrator, such as reading, signing, translating the assessment, or helping the student enter responses. These supports are recorded in the PNP Profile even though they are delivered by the test administrator outside of Student Portal.

- Human read aloud: Test administrators may read the assessment aloud to students. Alternate text for test administrators who will deliver the human read aloud will include descriptions of graphics and alternate text descriptions of images and are provided as additional pages after the main TIP. The Test Administration Manual also includes information about human read aloud.

- Sign interpretation of text: Test administrators may sign the content to students using American Sign Language (ASL), Signing Exact English, or personalized sign systems.

- Language translation of text: Test administrators may translate the text for students who are English learners or who communicate best in a language other than English. Language translations are not provided via the computer. State policy will guide whether translation can be used.

- Test administrator entering student responses: If students are unable to physically input their response options, they may indicate their responses through their typical response mode and/or forms of communication (e.g., eye gaze, gesture). Test administrators may key in those responses only when students are unable to independently and accurately record their responses in Student Portal.
• Partner-assisted scanning (PAS): PAS is a strategy in which test administrators assist students with scanning students’ response options. Test administrators read and/or point to each response option, and students indicate when presented their desired response.

**SYSTEM TIMEOUT**

The DLM alternate assessments are administered individually and are not timed. Students may take as much time as needed and work in settings that are most appropriate for them. In other words, any flexibility in location and assessment time that the student needs is permissible. For example, the student may take as many breaks as needed throughout the completion of a testlet. During the administration of a testlet, Student Portal can sit inactive for as long as 90 minutes before timing out.

At 88 minutes and 30 seconds of inactivity in the testlet, the system prompts the student with this warning message:

```
Your session is about to expire.
Select Extend Session to continue where you left off.
Time Remaining: 01 mins and 28 seconds
```

- **If the student does nothing.** In other words, if no activity occurs before the countdown reaches 0, the system logs the student out of the testlet and returns to the login screen. The testlet status returns to **Unused**, and the system retains no responses.
- **If the student selects Extend Session,** the system disregards the idle time, closes the prompt, and returns to the screen where the student was working.
- **If the student selects Logout,** the system logs the student out of the testlet and returns to the login screen. The testlet status returns to **Unused**, and the system retains no responses.

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who qualify for the DLM alternate assessments require extensive, repeated, and individualized instruction and ongoing supports that are not temporary or transient in nature, and they have difficulty retaining information in working memory for extended periods of time. Therefore, testlets were created to be short with only a few items, with each testlet beginning with an engagement activity designed to activate prior knowledge, motivate the students, and provide a context. While DLM test administration procedures are designed to be flexible and allow students to take breaks during a testlet, most students who experience an extended interruption during test administration have difficulty retaining information in working memory after that extended interruption. Research has shown
that extended interruptions during test administration can have adverse effects on student performance (Sinharay, et al., 2014). Because of this, Student Portal was designed to timeout after an extended period of inactivity without retaining the responses, allowing the student to begin the assessment afresh when ready.

**Supports Not Available in Student Portal**

Some supports that might be expected but are not available in the system include the following:

- **Sign language using human or avatar videos onscreen**: The majority of eligible students who communicate with sign language use Signed Exact English or personalized sign systems.
- **Tactile graphics**: Objects, tactile graphics, or tactile representations of pictures or objects presented onscreen as a concrete representation may be used. Educators may use individualized tactile representations with their students, as appropriate.

**Step 3: Discuss and Select Appropriate Accessibility Supports — Considerations for IEP Teams**

Student Portal allows many computer-based accessibility supports for a student to use during the assessment, such as various font colors or magnification sizes. In a student’s PNP Profile, the test administrator may choose from a number of Student Portal supports available for a DLM testlet. The test administrator is to include supports that are required to meet the student’s needs, such as those listed in the student’s IEP. Other supports are available for use, even if not required in the student’s IEP. These are supports the student may enjoy using and show a preference for, such as invert color choice.

Best practice is for the PNP Profile settings to be set prior to test administration. However, if those initial settings do not allow the student to fully access the content of the testlets, the PNP Profile settings may be adjusted between testlets to provide more appropriate access for the student. See Changing PNP Profile Settings During Testing as described on page 15 of this manual.

Also, during testing, best practice is to have student use only the PNP Profile supports or combination of supports that they have been using during regular instruction. Unfamiliar supports may be distracting and even detrimental during assessment.

**Deciding What Accessibility Supports Are Needed**

The IEP team determines an individual student’s needs, and test administrators then select the accessibility supports based on those needs rather than the disability category, grade level, or instructional setting.

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are also English learners need decisions about their language-related supports to be made by educators who understand them best. This person is typically the test administrator. Once the supports
are selected, these students are best served when the accessibility supports are used consistently for both instruction and assessment.

Students can gain experience with the specific Student Portal supports by using DLM practice activities and released testlets. These activities are intended for three main purposes:

a. To help a test administrator draw conclusions about a student’s ability to use a selected PNP Profile support during assessments
b. To make decisions about which PNP Profile support(s) best fit a student’s individual needs and preferences
c. To provide students with opportunities to practice using the navigation tools in the testlets prior to the day of the student’s first assessment

Released testlets will be available for every grade level to allow a student to practice using any of the PNP Profile supports as often as needed and to allow test administrators to observe a student’s interaction with those supports. Test administrators can change the selections in the PNP Profile, depending on the conclusions drawn about a student’s experience with the testlets. Additionally, repeated practice can increase both students’ and test administrators’ ease on the day the assessment window opens.

**GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND SELECTION OF APPROPRIATE ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORTS**

Some questions that teams may ask in the process of determining appropriate supports include the following:

- What are the student’s learning strengths, and in which areas does the student need improvement?
- How are a student’s knowledge and understanding of the Essential Elements impacted by the student’s learning needs?
- Which instructional and assessment tasks are difficult for the student to do independently when working one-on-one in the classroom and/or when interacting in an online environment?
- Which current supports help the student with these difficulties, when working one-on-one in the classroom and/or when interacting in an online environment? What kinds of instructional strategies (e.g., visual, tactile, auditory, combination) work best for the student?
- Which accessibility supports match these strategies and may help the student access the assessment?
- Which supports or materials does the student prefer?
- What were the results of routine assignments and classroom testing when accessibility supports were used or not used?
- Did the student have any difficulties interacting with these supports in the past? If so, what were the difficulties and how can they be resolved?
• Which accessibility supports will increase the student’s access to the assessment by addressing their learning needs and reducing the effect of their disability?
• Which effective combinations of accessibility supports will help the student? (Thompson, Morse, Sharpe, & Hall, 2005)

Test administrators may also need to amend a student’s IEP to include any additional, appropriate supports available in the PNP Profile that were not listed on the IEP, depending on state policy. Check state policy about amending the IEP.

The user interface in Student Portal has been specially designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. However, students may need various levels of support during the assessment to be able to interact with the computer. Testlets delivered directly to students via computer are designed under the assumption that students can interact with the computer independently.

**SUPPORTS: ALLOWED AND NOT ALLOWED**

The following supports are allowed:
• white boards
• traditional keyboards using word processing software
• adapted keyboards that include all 26 letters of the alphabet
• tablet computer keyboards using word processing software
• alternate keyboard, on screen switch enabled keyboard
• alternate pencils, including an alphabet flip charts
• eye-gaze displays of letters
• letter-by-letter dictation of any sort
• word prediction software
  o Word prediction is an intelligent word processing feature that can alleviate writing breakdowns for a range of students simply by reducing the number of keystrokes necessary for typing words, and it removes motor barriers to typing in order to reduce the gap between generating ideas and capturing them in writing.
• Pens, pencils, markers, and crayons can be used for the writing product a student produces off the computer for the writing testlets.
• Test administrators may also help students navigate across screens or enter responses that students select. The section Combining Accessibility Supports with Flexibility in Test Administration Procedures on page 28 describes additional supports that are allowed.

The following supports are NOT allowed:
• whole word or sentence dictation
The student is not allowed to dictate whole words or sentences since the full criteria for the administration of the writing testlets is not met and cannot be used for that purpose.

- speech-to-text software
- selection of pictures or words from a word bank.

- Pictures, symbols, or words from a word bank are not allowed and may not be substituted for words in a sentence. This is forbidden because the meaning that an individual assigns to a picture or symbol depends upon the individual’s motivation, neurological and developmental status, sensory abilities, cognitive, communication, and language skills, and world experience (Mineo Mollica, 2003).

Furthermore, the ability to learn the meaning of pictures or symbols is directly related to an individual’s understanding of the word associated with the picture or symbol. In other words, individuals who understand the meaning of the spoken word learn the associated picture or symbol rather easily while individuals who do not understand the spoken word take much longer to learn the meaning of the picture or symbol (Romski & Sevcik, 1996, 2005). Given that students who participate in the DLM alternate assessment have universally impaired cognitive and language skills, to have assurance that each student’s understanding of pictures and symbols introduced in the assessment will match the intended meaning is a guarantee that is not possible.

**COMBINING ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORTS WITH FLEXIBILITY IN TEST ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURES**

Effective use of the PNP Profile supports allows most students to have appropriate access to the assessment, making the DLM alternate assessment a meaningful indicator of students’ knowledge and understanding of the Essential Elements. However, test administrators may need to combine the accessibility supports listed on the PNP Profile with practices that are part of the allowable flexibility in test administration procedures.

When customizing the assessment process, using accessibility supports and allowable practices, keep in mind two general principles: (a) the student is expected to respond independently, and (b) supports are to be familiar to the student because they have been used during routine instruction.

Table 3 describes some common accessibility issues and potential solutions that are based on a combination of accessibility supports and allowable practices. The table includes suggestions for computer-delivered and teacher-administered testlets.
### Table 3

**Common Accessibility Issues and Example Solutions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessibility Issue</th>
<th>Example Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The student has difficulty interacting directly with the computer due to limited experience, motor skills, and/or devices. | • Navigation in Student Portal  
  o The test administrator may navigate the screens for the student.  
  o After the student indicates their responses to the test administrator, the test administrator enters the responses on behalf of the student. See additional example solutions below for students indicating their response options. |
| The student is blind and typically reads braille.                                   | • Braille forms: For students who read braille proficiently enough to demonstrate what they know and understand about the Essential Elements, braille forms of the assessments are available. However, braille forms are available only at upper linkage levels and only for some Essential Elements. See instructions for how to access and prepare for administering testlets in braille in the EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE.  
  • Alternate Form — Visual Impairment form: When a braille form is not available, an Alternate Form — Visual Impairment form may be available. These forms are also only available for some Essential Elements at upper linkage levels.  
  • Human Read Aloud: The test administrator may always read the testlet aloud to the student.  
  • Familiar materials and tactile graphics: The test administrator may use familiar materials or create tactile graphics in place of images that appear on screen for a student. Familiar materials may be substituted for unfamiliar materials as long the criteria of the item being tested continues to be met.  
  • SHOW: When the educator directions in a testlet use words like SHOW, the test administrator presents the content of the |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessibility Issue</th>
<th>Example Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The student has a severe visual impairment and needs a larger presentation of</td>
<td>• Magnification: The test administrator may use an interactive whiteboard,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>content than the 5x magnification setting provides.</td>
<td>projector, or any magnification device that works with the computer screen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Familiar Texts: The TIP will provide information to the test administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>about familiar texts being referenced in the testlet. ELA familiar texts may</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be retrieved from the DLM bookshelf in the <a href="#">Tar Heel Reader library</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and printed in the font size and contrast the student needs. Also, the test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>administrator may read aloud the text to the student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student is blind and does not communicate verbally.</td>
<td>• Human Read Aloud: The test administrator may use human read aloud to read the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>testlet aloud to the student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student is blind, does not read braille, and uses only a single-switch</td>
<td>• Familiar materials and tactile graphics: Objects, tactile graphics, or tactile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>system to communicate.</td>
<td>representations of pictures or objects presented onscreen as a concrete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The student receives testlets with pictures or manipulatives.</td>
<td>representation may be used. Test administrators may use individualized tactile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The TIP does not provide alternate text to describe the pictures or guidance on</td>
<td>representations with their students, as appropriate. See the TIP for more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>how the test administrator can deliver this assessment.</td>
<td>information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The student does not use braille, so that support was not chosen as a PNP</td>
<td>• See Alternate Text for Reading Testlets and Retrieve the Testlet Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profile setting.</td>
<td>Pages and Gather Materials in the <a href="#">TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL</a> for the human</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>read-aloud guidelines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student uses sign language to communicate and has limited proficiency in</td>
<td>• Sign language: The test administrator may sign the text, spelling unfamiliar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading text.</td>
<td>words and adapting or interpreting the language as needed. The test administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>may use signs that are familiar to the student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student usually accesses text with pictures. During instruction, the</td>
<td>• Most Essential Elements that include a text focus on a student’s ability to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>educator provides supplemental</td>
<td>make meaning from words. The text may be read aloud to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility Issue</td>
<td>Example Solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pictures as necessary, specifically for the response options, so the student can access the text. However, that practice is not allowed during the DLM assessment.</td>
<td>the student by selecting the synthetic Spoken Audio or Human Read Aloud in the PNP Profile. However, the use of picture symbols to support word reading is not allowed. See Supports: Allowed and Not Allowed on page 27 of this manual for more information about supports that are not allowed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student uses low-tech (i.e., not computerized) eye gaze to communicate.</td>
<td>• Offline Response Options: The test administrator may present the response options offline, in an alternate format for which the student is accustomed. The test administrator will then enter the student’s selected responses in the testlet in Student Portal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student uses eye gaze or another means and can only indicate yes/no responses.</td>
<td>Alternate Presentations of Response Options: 1. The test administrator may present the item and response options as follows: o First, read the item and response options that are presented onscreen. o Then, repeat the item and present response option 1, asking the student something like, “Do you want this option? Answer yes or no.” o The student provides their response. o The process is repeated for response option 2. o The process is repeated for response option 3 until all response options have been presented to the student. o If the student has indicated yes to more than one response option, read the selected options again, following the above process until the student has selected only one response option. o If the student has not narrowed the selection to one response option, the test administrator may try another approach such as #2 in the example solutions below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student always selects the same response option, e.g., the first or the last option when presented the response options.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student can be presented only two response options at a time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility Issue</td>
<td>Example Solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2. The test administrator may present two response options at a time until the student has eliminated all but one response option.  
  ○ To maintain validity, present the response options in the same order they are presented in the onscreen testlet.  
  ○ Present response option 1 and response option 2, and then say something like this to the student, “Which of these options do you want to choose?”  
  ○ Be patient to allow the student time to select a response option.  
  ○ Once a response is selected, present that response and option 3 and allow the student time to select a response.  
  ○ Then, repeat the above process until all options have been presented.  
  ○ When the responses have been narrowed to the final response, enter it in the testlet in Student Portal. | |

The student uses one or two switches to access the computer but is not 100% consistent or accurate in their use.

- **Use of switches**  
  ○ The test administrator may use partner-assisted scanning to point to and/or read each response option.  
  ○ The student indicates when the desired response option is presented.  
  ○ Also, the test administrator may navigate from screen to screen and allow the student to use scanning to select the desired response option on each item screen.

The student needs special equipment for positioning of materials to respond to items (e.g., slant board) or non-computerized materials (e.g., hook and loop materials on a board).

- **Special Equipment**  
  ○ The test administrator may use the equipment and materials that are familiar to the student.  
  ○ The student continues to interact with the content on the screen.  
  ○ The test administrator may navigate and enter responses that the student has indicated outside of Student Portal.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessibility Issue</th>
<th>Example Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The student uses graphic organizers, supports, or other materials to complete academic work.</td>
<td>• The test administrator may use the supports and materials that are familiar to the student. The student continues to interact with the content on the screen, but the test administrator may navigate and enter the student’s responses into Student Portal. See the TIP for each testlet for specific approved and unapproved materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student has a physical disability that results in limited mobility. The testlet requires the student to manipulate materials.</td>
<td>A student with limited mobility may use their current mode of communication to direct the test administrator to select a response option and/or manipulate materials on their behalf. • The test administrator also may use the strategy of partner-assisted scanning for testing. The test administrator may select this setting in the student’s PNP Profile. NOTE: Partner-assisted scanning is a strategy used outside of the system. It is a Category 3 setting in the PNP Profile and as such, does not make a direct change to a testlet.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| The student requires special technologies to complete the writing assessment.        | • Writing Testlets  
  o Students may use the writing technologies or materials they normally use in everyday instruction to complete their DLM writing testlets as long as the materials involve the use of all 26 letters of the alphabet to produce letters and words.  
  o Students may not use word banks, picture banks, or symbol- or icon-based communication systems for the portion of the assessment that requires writing with the alphabet. Also, students may not use whole word or sentence dictation or speech-to-text software. See Supports: Allowed and Not Allowed on page 27 of this manual. Thorough coverage of the writing testlets is also found in the TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL. |
While allowed supports and practices during assessment administration offer a great deal of flexibility, some practices are not allowed. These practices are described in the Practices Not Allowed section in the TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL and are summarized in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Practices not allowed in administering testlets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practices Not Allowed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Repeating the item after the student has selected a response. This action is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>considered prompting and may influence the student to choose a different response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Using physical prompts or hand-over-hand guidance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reducing the number of response options or giving content hints.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Modifying the content of a performance task in a computer-delivered testlet in an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attempt to help the student arrive at the correct response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Changing tone, inflection, or body language to cue the correct response when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading testlets to a student.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. See Supports: Allowed and Not Allowed on page 27 of this manual for more information about why these are prohibited.

Students who take the DLM alternate assessment can indicate their response through whatever means they can that are allowed. Sometimes test administrators need to think creatively about how to support students with different means of expressive communication.

Using the general principles above and specific examples of supports that are allowed and not allowed, the test administrator plans assessment sessions for students who need additional supports. If supports that are not listed in this guide are provided, test administrators may be asked to describe these supports, as determined by state policy. The assessment coordinator can provide more information about state guidelines on additional supports.

**TESTLET INFORMATION PAGES AND ACCESSIBILITY**

Testlet Information Pages (TIPs) provide test administrators with information specific to each testlet, including exceptions to allowable supports, alternate text to use with human read aloud, and appropriateness of calculator use. While a test administrator may normally use all PNP Profile supports described in the Supports: Allowed and Not Allowed section on page 27 of this manual, the TIP also indicates when it is not appropriate to use a support in a specific testlet.
Test administrators receive the TIP in Educator Portal after each testlet is assigned to a student. Test administrators review the TIP before beginning a student’s assessment. More information about the TIP, including how to access a TIP and the content of a TIP, is provided in the Educator Portal User Guide and Test Administration Manual. Also see the Test Tickets and TIPs helplet on the Educator Resource Videos page (https://dynamiclearningmaps.org/erp/videos) on the DLM website (http://dynamiclearningmaps.org).

**STEP 4: SELECT AND VIEW SUPPORTS IN THE KITE SYSTEM**

**DEMONSTRATION OF PERSONAL NEEDS AND PREFERENCES SUPPORTS: WHAT STUDENTS WILL SEE**

This section provides more information, including screenshots, related to some of the PNP Profile accessibility supports described in Step 2 of the customization process. The supports described in this section include magnification, overlay color, invert color choice, contrast color, Spoken Audio, and switch use. Test administrators also can explore and try the PNP supports online through released testlets and can practice using the supports with students in Student Portal. Providing students ample time to use the supports in the released testlets enables test administrators to determine which settings work best for each student.

```
HINT: Combining overlay color, invert color choice, and contrast color results in a layering of the options, which is counterproductive and will not be helpful to the student.
```

**Magnification**

When test administrators choose magnification, the system zooms in on the whole screen (see Figure 8 and Figure 9). The magnification options are 2x, 3x, 4x, and 5x. Test administrators will have to scroll to the right and/or down to see the entire screen and find the NEXT button when magnification is selected. Test administrators must keep in mind that this scrolling may negatively affect the student’s ability to access the assessment.
Figure 8. A screenshot featuring 2x magnification.

Figure 9. A screenshot featuring 5x magnification. Users must scroll both up and down and left and right because the size of the content exceeds the viewing area.

**Overlay Color**

Background overlay color options are blue, green, pink, gray, and yellow. The default is white. The font remains black (see Figure 10).
Invert Color Choice

The standard presentation in testlets is a white background with black font. When Invert Color Choice is selected, the background is black and the font is white (see Figure 11).

Contrast Color

Contrast color allows the test administrator to change both the background and the font colors. The background and font color options are a white background with green font, a white background with red font, a black background with gray font, or a black background with yellow font (see Figure 12).
Figure 12. A screenshot featuring contrast color with a white background and green font.

**Spoken Audio**

Spoken Audio has three types of options: text only, text and graphics, and nonvisual. The text and graphics option and the nonvisual option provide audio for images in addition to reading the onscreen text. The nonvisual option is intended for students who are blind or have visual impairments and therefore need the layout of the page described as well. For example, on technology-enhanced items, the Spoken Audio includes information about choosing response options on the left side of the screen and moving them to areas on the right side of the screen. The text-only option is appropriate when the student has some vision and does not require read aloud of physical layout and directional information.

The **READ** button is visible at the bottom of the screen upon opening the assessment, as shown in Figure 13.
After clicking the **READ** button, the Kite system reads the text aloud. As shown in *Figure 14*, a sentence is highlighted while being read. Different information is read aloud depending on which option is selected in the PNP Profile: text and graphics, text only, or nonvisual. Specific information about spoken audio is in the **TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL**.

**Switch Use**

Table 5 and Table 6 summarize the actions that occur when switches are used for switch-accessible items in Student Portal. In both cases, if switch access is selected in the PNP Profile, then a switch interface is required for the student to use to interact with the testlets in Student Portal.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Type</th>
<th>Single-Switch System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multiple choice:</strong></td>
<td>When Single Switch is selected, Student Portal will scan through each response option and navigation button on the page, based upon settings in the student’s PNP Profile. The following can be selected:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Activate by Default: This is automatically selected and cannot be changed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The Scan Speed (seconds): This is the number of seconds the response option is highlighted, before the highlighting moves on to the next response option.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The Automatic Scan - Initial Delay: This is the length of the delay before scanning begins on each screen of a testlet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Value in seconds: The length of the delay, in seconds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Manual Override: This setting allows the student to initiate the scanning action on each screen of a testlet by pressing the switch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The Automatic Scan Repeat Frequency: This is the number of times the items on each screen are scanned before the scanner stops. This can be 1-5 or infinity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sorting:</strong></td>
<td>Student Portal will scan through each drop zone and navigation button, based on switch settings selected in the PNP Profile as described above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When a drop zone is selected, Student Portal scans the response options from top to bottom within the drop zone until a response option is selected or the scan cycle has repeated the number of times selected in the Automatic Scan Repeat Frequency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Matching:</strong></td>
<td>Student Portal will scan through the group of response options on the left, the group on the right, and the navigation buttons, based on switch settings selected in the PNP Profile as previously described.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• First, the student uses the switch to select a set of response options.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Next, the system scans the response options within the set from top to bottom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Then, the student uses the switch to select the individual response option.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NOTE: The response option remains highlighted as the system then scans top-to-bottom through the potential matching response options on the other side of the screen. When the student uses the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item Type</td>
<td>Single-Switch System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>switch to select the matching response option, the connecting line appears.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**General Information**
In automatic scanning or manual override, after selecting a response option, the scanning stops. The scanning cycle restarts from the beginning when the student presses the switch.

**Table 6**

*Two-Switch Use by Item Type*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Type</th>
<th>Two-Switch System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Multiple-choice:** Text or pictures as response options. | 1. The student uses the switch set to emulate the Tab key to move from one response option to the next. Student Portal highlights each response option and the navigation button as the Tab key switch is activated.  
2. The student uses the switch set to emulate the Enter key to select a response option when highlighted to indicate the desired response. |

**Sorting:** The student moves response options from the left side of the screen into groups on the right side.  
1. The student uses the switch set to emulate the Tab key to move from one drop zone to the next.  
2. The student selects a drop zone when highlighted, using the switch set to emulate the Enter key.  
3. Once a drop zone is selected, the student uses the switch set to emulate the Tab key to move through response options in the drop zone from top to bottom.  
4. The student uses the switch set to emulate the Enter key to select an individual response option when highlighted.  

**Matching:** The student matches response options from two lists.  
1. The student uses the switch set to emulate the Tab key to move from the set of response options on the left to the set on the right and then to the navigation buttons.  
2. The student uses the switch set to emulate the Enter key to select a list when highlighted.  
3. Once a list is selected, the student uses the switch set to emulate the Tab key to move through response options in the list, from top to bottom.  
4. The student uses the switch set to emulate the Enter key to select an individual response option when highlighted.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Type</th>
<th>Two-Switch System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOTE:</td>
<td>The response option remains highlighted as the student resumes use of the Tab and Enter key switches to select the matching response option on the other side.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Information</td>
<td>After selecting a response option, selecting the Tab key restarts the cycle over from the beginning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Activating the switch will highlight each option for the student. The **BACK** button is highlighted, as shown in Figure 15 and Figure 16.

**Figure 15.** A screenshot featuring a single-switch and two-switch example.

**Figure 16.** A screenshot featuring a single-switch and two-switch example.
STEP 5: PREPARE FOR THE ASSESSMENT—USING THE CHOSEN ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORTS

In addition to the supports listed in the TIP, test administrators may need the following:

- appropriate assistive devices for the student (e.g., switches)
- additional materials familiar to the student for use during the assessment (e.g., unit cubes)
- concentration aids used by the student (e.g., stress ball)

Information about preparing for teacher-administered and computer-delivered testlets is available in the TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL.

ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGIES

Providing instruction aligned to the Essential Elements and reinforcing similar vocabulary helps students prepare for the DLM assessment. Also, test administrators can help students develop comfort and confidence with test formats by using practice and released testlets.

In addition, the DLM Consortium has created online professional development learning modules to help test administrators understand both the content standards and the Essential Elements, and their application to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Each of the interactive modules is short (30 to 45 minutes) and focuses on a single topic. Information about these modules is available under the Professional Development tab of the DLM website (http://dynamiclearningmaps.org). Most of the modules are subject specific and provide information and strategies to help test administrators instruct students based on the subject being assessed in Student Portal.

STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS WITH THE MOST COMPLEX NEEDS

Two professional development modules are especially designed for instruction for students with the most complex needs who complete the DLM assessments at the Initial and Distal Precursor linkage levels. Professional development modules are located through the DLM website at https://www.dlmpd.com/.

- “Beginning Communicators” describes symbolic and non-symbolic forms of communication, the distinction between pre-intentional and pre-symbolic communicators, and identifies additional sources of support for building communication skills.
- “Symbols” is an overview of symbols to support communication and interaction. The module also describes the use of symbols and photographs in text.

Five other modules can also be appropriate for these students:

- “Writing with Alternate Pencils” describes ways to get students started with writing when they cannot use a traditional pencil, pen, or computer keyboard. The content of this module applies to students at all levels of literacy understanding including students who do not yet know letter names or sounds.
• “DLM Core Vocabulary and Communication” focuses on the use of core vocabulary as a support for communication for students who cannot use speech to meet their face-to-face communication needs and require augmentative and alternative communication.
• “Measuring and Comparing Lengths” focuses on understanding the attribute of length, how to compare and measure units, and the use of number lines and rulers in the measuring process.
• “Perimeter, Volume, and Mass” focuses on the basic concepts of perimeter, volume, and mass.
• “Patterns and Sequence” discusses recognizing and creating patterns as a basic mathematics skill upon which many mathematical concepts are based, and using repetition with variety to support student understanding of patterns.

**STEP 6: EVALUATE THE ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORTS USED AFTER ASSESSMENTS**

After the student completes all the testlets during the assessment window, test administrators and IEP teams need to evaluate the overall use of the accessibility supports. Test administrators will then be able to further customize accessibility supports for future assessments. Test administrators and IEP teams can use the following list of questions to evaluate the accessibility supports used by students (Thompson et al., 2005).

**QUESTIONS TO GUIDE EVALUATION AT THE STUDENT LEVEL**

This section addresses supports both in and outside of the Kite system.

a. Which accessibility supports did the student use during instruction and assessment?
b. What were the results of classroom assignments and assessments when accessibility supports were used compared to when they were not used?
c. If a student did not meet the expected level of performance, was it caused by not having access to the necessary instruction, not receiving the appropriate supports, or using inappropriate accessibility supports?
d. How well did the student perceive the accessibility supports to work?
e. Which combinations of accessibility supports seemed to be effective?
f. What difficulties, if any, were encountered in the use of the accessibility supports?
g. How well did test administrators and others perceive the accessibility support to work?
h. Did the student receive the accessibility supports documented in their IEP?
i. Are the selected accessibility supports appropriate for the student’s continued use or should any be discontinued?
REFERENCES


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

**display enhancements**
Options that change the testlet appearance on the student’s device screen, including magnification, overlay color, inverted color choice, and contrast color.

**Educator Portal**
Educator Portal is the administrative application where staff and educators manage student data and retrieve reports. Users can access Educator Portal via [https://educator.kiteaai.org/](https://educator.kiteaai.org/). For information on working within Educator Portal, see the DATA MANAGEMENT MANUAL and the EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE on the DLM website.

**engagement activity**
An activity at the beginning of a testlet that describes a scenario, taps prior knowledge or experience, and/or introduces the concept to be addressed. In English language arts 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.

**Essential Elements**
Essential Elements build a bridge from the content in the grade-level standards to academic expectations for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. They are specific statements of knowledge and skills linked to the grade-level expectations identified in K-12 grade-level standards for English language arts 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.

Core questions from the First Contact survey are used to recommend the linkage level for each Essential Element during the fall window. Core questions are also used during the spring window for any Essential Elements that were not tested during the fall window.

Instruction and Assessment Planner
A part in Educator Portal where test administrators perform assessment functions for a student during both the fall and spring windows. Functions include selecting an Essential Element and linkage level for instruction and subsequent testing. Most data about the student can be accessed from the Instruction and Assessment Planner, including mastery of an Essential Element at the tested linkage level and indications when the blueprint requirements are met.

Instructionally embedded assessment (IE versions)
Assessment that occurs throughout instruction in both the fall and spring windows.

Kite Student Portal
A secure customized interface used to deliver assessments to students. All students taking the DLM alternate assessment will have unique accounts in Kite Student Portal. Test administrators do not have accounts in Student Portal. See the TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL for more information about Student Portal.
linkage level
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.

Science: An incremental level of complexity toward the learning target where an assessment was developed for a particular Essential Element. Science has three linkage levels: Initial, Precursor, and Target. Linkage levels are always related directly to grade-level Essential Elements but at different levels of cognitive complexity. The Target level is most closely related to the grade-level expectation.

materials
Materials generically refer to any objects, manipulatives, and tools used during an assessment. Materials lists are specific for each subject during each window. The lists are found on each state’s DLM website under Educator Resources.

node
ELA and mathematics: A representation in the DLM learning maps of an individual skill or conceptual understanding identified in the research in ELA and mathematics.

Personal Learning Profile
This is 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.

Personal Needs and Preferences (PNP) Profile
Student-specific information that informs Kite Student Portal about an individual student’s personal needs and preferences. The PNP Profile includes information the system needs to make the student’s user interface 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.

plan
A plan is created in the Instruction and Assessment Planner in Educator Portal. A plan includes the educator-selected Essential Element and educator-selected linkage level and leads to the educator-assigned testlet for ELA, mathematics, and science during the fall window and ELA and mathematics during the spring window.
released testlets  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.

state education agency (SEA)  A state department of education.

stem  The stem is the beginning part of the item that presents a problem to solve or an item to respond to. 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 to choose.

technology-enhanced items  Computer-delivered test items that require a specialized interaction, such as click and drag. A technology-enhanced item is any item that is not answered using direct selection.

testlet (IE version)  A short assessment that begins with an engagement activity and includes 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 either teacher-administered or computer-delivered. More specific information is found in the TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL.
## APPENDIX A: OTHER SUPPORTS

The following table describes settings available under the Other Supports tab in the Personal Needs and Preferences (PNP) Profile in Educator Portal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Supports</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alternate Form-Visual Impairment</td>
<td>Most testlets are designed for all students taking the DLM alternate assessment. For a limited number of Essential Elements and linkage levels, alternate forms are provided for students with visual impairments. These testlets are teacher administered (not braille). When alternate forms are available, selecting this option will direct Student Portal to deliver that form. Alternate forms are not available for all Essential Elements at all linkage levels. When not available, a standard form will be delivered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Switch System</td>
<td>Student Portal automatically supports two-switch step scanning with a switch interface in which one switch is set up to emulate the Tab key to move between choices and the other switch is set up to emulate the Enter key to select the choice when highlighted. Test administrators record two-switch scanning in PNP Profile settings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualized Manipulatives</td>
<td>Test administrators may use manipulatives that are familiar to students (e.g., abacus, unit cubes, interlocking blocks, counters, linking letters).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculator</td>
<td>Students may use a calculator unless the TIP indicates a calculator may not be used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Read Aloud</td>
<td>Test administrators may read the assessment aloud to students. Alternate text for test administrators who will deliver the human read aloud will include descriptions of graphics and alternate text descriptions of images and are provided as additional pages after the main TIP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Supports</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sign Interpretation</strong></td>
<td>For students whose primary mode of receptive communication is sign language, test administrators may sign the assessment to the student using American Sign Language (ASL), Signed Exact English, or personalized sign systems. Sign language interpreters use the alternate text provided in the TIP for picture descriptions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language Translation</strong></td>
<td>For students who are English learners and whose best expressive and/or receptive communication is a language other than English, test administrators may translate the assessment for the student. The Kite system does not provide language translations. State policy will determine whether translation can be used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Masking</strong></td>
<td>Masking is not an option in Student Portal, but it is an acceptable support for students with visual impairments. Test administrators may use a piece of paper to cover portions of the screen to reduce visual clutter without otherwise affecting the information or number of response options.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Test Administrator Entering of Responses for Student</strong></td>
<td>If students are unable to select response options themselves, they may indicate their responses through normal response types and/or forms of communication, such as eye gaze or gesture; test administrators may then key in those responses. This option is to be used only when students are unable to independently and accurately record their responses in Student Portal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partner-Assisted Scanning (PAS)</strong></td>
<td>Partner Assisted Scanning (PAS) is a support in which test administrators assist students with scanning students’ response options. Students indicate when their desired responses are presented. Test administrators record PAS in PNP Profile settings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B: RELEVANT FEDERAL LEGISLATION

Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015
The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) replaces the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and amends the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. The ESSA removes federally mandated interventions and instead assigns accountability at the state level. ESSA continues to require fair assessments for students with the most cognitive disabilities. States will

…provide for the participation in assessments of all students; the appropriate accommodations, such as interoperability with, and ability to use, assistive technology, for children with disabilities (as defined in section 602(3) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1401(3))), including students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and students with a disability who are provided accommodations under an Act other than the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), necessary to measure the academic achievement of such children relative to the challenging state academic standards or alternate academic achievement standards described in paragraph (1)(E). [Sec. 1111 2 B vii I II]

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004
The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) specifically governs services provided to students with disabilities. Accountability at the individual level is provided through IEPs developed for each student’s unique needs. IDEA requires the participation of students with the most cognitive disabilities in state- and district-wide assessments. Specific IDEA requirements include:

Children with disabilities are included in general state- and district-wide assessment programs, with appropriate accommodations, where necessary [Sec. 612 (a)(16)(A)]. The term “individualized education program” or “IEP” means a written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with this section and that includes…a statement of any individual modifications in the administration of state- or district-wide assessments of student achievement that are needed in order for the child to participate in such assessment; and if the IEP team determines that the child will not participate in a particular state- or district-wide assessment of student achievement (or part of such an assessment), a statement of why that assessment is not appropriate for the child; and how the child will be assessed. [Sec. 614 (d)(1)(A)(V) and (VI)]
APPENDIX C: DLM ACCESSIBILITY WORKSHEET FOR TEST ADMINISTRATORS AND IEP TEAMS

States may use this worksheet to indicate which supports must be determined by IEP teams and to document the supports provided to each student. When updating supports during testing, note that Category 1 supports update in the system immediately, as do individual manipulatives and calculator use from Category 2. However, four of the Category 2 supports require 24 hours to update: braille, Alternate Form—Visual Impairment, Single-Switch, and Two-Switch systems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessibility Support</th>
<th>Settings in the PNP Profile that activate supports within Student Portal</th>
<th>Settings in the PNP Profile that requires supports or materials in addition to those within Student Portal</th>
<th>Settings in the PNP Profile that require supports provided by the test administrator outside of Student Portal</th>
<th>Settings Selected for STUDENT NAME</th>
<th>Notes and Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnification</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overlay Color</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invert Color Choice</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast Color</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoken Audio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Text Only</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Text and Graphics</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Nonvisual</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncontracted Braille EBAE</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncontracted Braille UEB</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility Support</td>
<td>Settings in the PNP Profile that activate supports within Student Portal</td>
<td>Settings in the PNP Profile that requires supports or materials in addition to those within Student Portal</td>
<td>Settings in the PNP Profile that require supports provided by the test administrator outside of Student Portal</td>
<td>Settings Selected for STUDENT NAME</td>
<td>Notes and Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Switch System (Access Profile Enabled)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Switch System</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualized Manipulatives</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculator</td>
<td>See TIP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate Form—Visual Impairment</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Category 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Read Aloud</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sign Interpretation of Text</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Language Translation of Text</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test Administrator Entering of Responses for Student</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner-Assisted Scanning</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# STATE APPENDICES

## DOCUMENT HISTORY

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Section Name/Summary of Changes</th>
<th>Starting Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08/01/2019</td>
<td>Updates to section Changing PNP Profile Settings During Testing</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Updates to braille form availability during the assessment windows in section Category 2 settings in the PNP Profile require additional supports or materials</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New section Strategies for students with the most complex needs</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Updates to Glossary</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Important Dates to Remember

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 08/31/2019 | KiteStudent Portal Update  
Chromebooks auto update  
IPad auto updated if automatic update is turned on  
Mac and PC reinstall using icon |
| 09/09/2019 | ELA, Math, & Science Instructionally Embedded Assessment opens  
- 09/09/2019 – 02/26/2020  
- 12/23-01/01 window closes for maintenance |
| 09/18/2019 | Moodle Training opens. |
| 09/25-26/2019 | Upstate NYSAA-DLM Training  
- 09/25/2019- Syracuse  
- 09/26/2019- Albany |
| 10/01/2019 | Printed manuals sent to schools |
| 10/15-17/2019 | Downstate NYSAA-DLM Training  
- 10/15/2019- NYC-BOE D1-32  
- 10/16/2019- NYC-BOE D75  
- 10/17/2019- NYC Non-Publics & Charters |
<p>| 10/21/2019 | Recommended deadline to complete review of user information in Educator Portal. Make corrections, add new users and delete users no longer needing accounts. |
| 11/08/2019 | NYSAA-eligible students need to be identified in the state data warehouse with the program service code 0220 to be included in the enrollment pull. Districts/Schools utilizing the |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/11/2019</td>
<td>NYSED pull of students identified as NYSAA-eligible for loading of enrollment file to Educator Portal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/15/2019</td>
<td>NYSED loads enrollment file to Educator Portal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/18/2019</td>
<td>Roster of students begins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/15/2019</td>
<td>Recommended deadline to complete First Contact Survey and Personal Needs Profile for participation in spring assessment to utilize the Instructionally Embedded Window.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/27/2020</td>
<td>Parent Brochures sent to schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/07/2020</td>
<td>Final date for Braille marked in First Contact Survey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/07/2019</td>
<td>Deadline to complete PNP and FCS for participation in Spring assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/26/2020</td>
<td>ELA, Math and Science Instructionally Embedded Window closes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/04/2019</td>
<td>Shipment of Braille forms or embossing paper to school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/09/2020</td>
<td>Spring assessment window opens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/05/2020</td>
<td>Spring Assessment window closes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
June 2019

TO: District Superintendents
Superintendents of Schools
Special Education Directors
Chairpersons of Committees on Special Education
Project Managers for the Level I Data Repositories

FROM: Steven E. Katz

SUBJECT: Birthdate Ranges for Students with Disabilities Participating in the 2019-20 New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA)

Students with disabilities participating in the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) are assessed according to chronological ages aligned with grade levels. The chart below provides information on the age ranges for students with disabilities participating in the 2019-20 NYSAA. Students should be tested based on their birthdate in the content areas indicated for each grade level.

Please contact the Office of State Assessment at 518-474-5900 if you have any questions regarding the birthdate ranges for students participating in the NYSAA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthdate</th>
<th>Grade and Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 1, 2010–August 31, 2011</td>
<td>Grade 3 ELA and Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1, 2009–August 31, 2010</td>
<td>Grade 4 ELA, Math, and Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1, 2008–August 31, 2009</td>
<td>Grade 5 ELA and Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1, 2007–August 31, 2008</td>
<td>Grade 6 ELA and Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1, 2006–August 31, 2007</td>
<td>Grade 7 ELA and Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1, 2005–August 31, 2006</td>
<td>Grade 8 ELA, Math, and Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1, 2001–August 31, 2002</td>
<td>Secondary-Level ELA, Math, and Science*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: NYSAA-eligible students who do not meet the age criteria above and will be exiting school before they reach their eighteenth birthday must take the secondary-level NYSAA before they leave school (i.e., when they are 17 years old). NYSAA-eligible students with a birth date prior to September 1, 2001 who have not been assessed at the secondary level must be assessed in 2019-20 before they leave school. All NYSAA-eligible high school students are assigned to the Grade 9 cohort in Educator Portal, regardless of the actual grade that the student is enrolled in at school. The grade must be 9 in the Educator Portal system.
Eligibility and Participation Criteria - NYSAA

Definition of a Student with a Severe Disability (Section 100.1 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education)

“Students with severe disabilities” refers to students who have limited cognitive abilities combined with behavioral and/or physical limitations and who require highly specialized education and/or social, psychological, and medical services in order to maximize their full potential for useful and meaningful participation in society and for self-fulfillment. Students with severe disabilities may experience severe speech, language, and/or perceptual-cognitive impairments and challenging behaviors that interfere with learning and socialization opportunities. These students may also have extremely fragile physiological conditions and may require personal care, physical/verbal supports, and assistive technology devices.

NYSAA Eligibility

The process of determining eligibility begins with the Committee on Special Education (CSE). The CSE determines on an individual basis whether the student will participate in:

- the State’s general assessment with or without accommodations;
- the State’s alternate assessment with or without accommodations;
- or
- a combination of the State’s general assessment for some content areas and the State’s alternate assessment for other content areas.

The CSE ensures that decisions regarding participation in the State testing program are not based on:

- category of disability,
- language differences,
- excessive or extended absences, or
- cultural or environmental factors.

The CSE ensures that each student has a personalized system of communication that addresses his/her needs regarding disability, culture, and native language so the student can demonstrate his/her present level of performance.

Tests and other assessment procedures are conducted according to the requirements of section 200.4(b)(6) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education and section 300.320(a)(6) of the Code of Federal Regulations.

NYSAA Participation Criteria

Only students with severe cognitive disabilities are eligible for the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA). The CSE determines whether a student with a severe cognitive disability is eligible to take the NYSAA based on the following criteria:

- the student has a severe cognitive disability and significant deficits in communication/language and significant deficits in adaptive behavior; and
- the student requires a highly specialized educational program that facilitates the acquisition, application, and transfer of skills across natural environments (home, school, community, and/or
workplace); and

- the student requires educational support systems, such as assistive technology, personal care services, health/medical services, or behavioral intervention.

May 2019

TO: District Superintendents
Superintendents of Public Schools
Public School Administrators
Charter Schools
Religious and Independent School Administrators
Directors of Special Education
Directors of Pupil Personnel Services
Chairpersons of Committees on Special Education
Organizations, Parents, and Individuals Concerned with Special Education

FROM: Christopher Suriano

SUBJECT: Eligibility Criteria for Participation in the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA)

This memorandum is to inform school districts of the new policy brief, *Eligibility Criteria for Participation in the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA)*, developed by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) to assist school districts in determining the appropriate participation of students with severe disabilities in NYSAA. The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires that states administer annual statewide assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics to all students in grades 3-8 and at least once in high school, as well as assessments in science once in each grade span (i.e., 3-5, 6-9, 10-12). ESSA includes provisions to ensure that all students are tested, offered appropriate accommodations when needed, and held to the same standards.

To ensure that the vast majority of students take a state’s general assessment and only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities take an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards, ESSA places a state-level cap on the total number of students with significant cognitive disabilities who are assessed with an alternate assessment to 1.0 percent of the total number of students in the state who are assessed in the subject. States may not prohibit a school district from assessing more than 1.0 percent of its assessed students with an alternate assessment. However, states must require school districts that assess more than 1.0 percent of their assessed students in any subject with an alternate assessment to submit information to the state justifying the need to exceed the 1.0 percent threshold.

Consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), committees on special education (CSEs) must follow state guidelines for determining on a case-by-case basis whether a student is most appropriately assessed with an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards. To assist CSEs in determining
whether NYSAA is the most appropriate assessment for an individual student, NYSED has developed the attached policy brief, decision-making flowchart, and decision-making checklist which should be used in conjunction with guidance provided in NYSED’s *Eligibility and Participation Criteria - NYSAA* [http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/nysaa/2017-18/nysaa-eligibilityb.pdf].

If a student is determined eligible to participate in NYSAA, ESSA requires that, as part of the process for developing the IEP, the student’s parents be clearly informed that their child’s academic achievement will be measured based on alternate academic achievement standards that do not meet the expectations necessary to earn a regular high school diploma in New York State and how participation in NYSAA will affect their child from completing the requirements for a regular New York State high school diploma. To assist school districts in ensuring that parents are appropriately informed, NYSED has developed the attached *Parent Notification of Participation in the New York State Alternate Assessment (Sample Letter)*. CSEs should also be discussing this information at each student’s annual review meeting.

NYSED will annually notify school districts that exceed the 1.0 percent participation cap that they are required to submit information justifying the need to assess more than 1.0 percent of their students with NYSAA in one or more subject areas. As part of the justification, school districts will be required to provide assurance to NYSED that CSEs are using *Eligibility and Participation Criteria - NYSAA* in determining if a student with a disability will participate in NYSAA. As required by ESSA, NYSED will make all submitted justifications publicly available.

Additional information on administering NYSAA to students with severe disabilities is available on the Office of State Assessment’s *New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) webpage* [http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/nysaa/home.html]. Questions regarding this memorandum may be directed to the Special Education Policy Unit at (518) 473-2878 or to speced@nysed.gov. Information about NYS’s procedures for school districts that assess more than 1.0 percent of their students in any subject is posted on the *Office of Special Education’s News, Announcements and Timely Information webpage* [http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/timely.htm].


*New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) Participation Decision-Making Flowchart*

*New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) Participation Decision-Making Checklist*

*Parent Notification of Participation in the New York State Alternate Assessment (Sample Letter)*
Eligibility Criteria for Participation in the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA)

May 2019

This is one in a series of policy briefs prepared by the New York State Education Department on topics pertaining to implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in New York State.

| Which students must participate in State or district-wide assessments? | The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) require that all students, including students with the most significant disabilities, be included in State or district-wide assessment programs. These requirements do not allow students to be excluded from statewide assessments. However, for students who are unable to participate in the State’s general assessment system because of the severity of their disabilities, even with accommodations, states are required to develop and implement an alternate assessment.

“High-quality assessments are essential to effectively educating students, measuring progress, and promoting equity. Done well and thoughtfully, they provide critical information for educators, families, the public, and students themselves and create the basis for improving outcomes for all learners.” (Every Student Succeeds Act Assessments under Title I, Part A & Title I, Part B: Summary of Final Regulations [https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essaassessmentfactsheet1207.pdf]) |
|---|---|
| What is the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA)? | NYSAA is part of the New York State (NYS) testing program that measures attainment of the State’s learning standards for students with the most severe disabilities in grades 3-8 and high school in the areas of English language arts and mathematics, as well as science once in each grade span (i.e., 3-5, 6-9, 10-12).

| Which students are eligible to participate in NYSAA? | Students with severe disabilities, as defined in 8 NYCRR section 100.1(t)(2)(iv) [https://www.dos.ny.gov/info/nycrr.html], are eligible for participation in NYSAA. “Students with severe disabilities” refers to students who have limited cognitive abilities combined with behavioral and/or physical limitations and who require highly specialized education and/or social, psychological, and medical services in order to maximize their full potential for useful and meaningful participation in society and for self-fulfillment. Students with severe disabilities may experience severe speech, language, and/or perceptual-cognitive impairments and challenging behaviors that interfere with learning and socialization opportunities. These students may also have extremely fragile physiological conditions and may require personal care, physical/verbal supports, and assistive technology devices. |
How is a student determined eligible to participate in NYSAA?

The committee on special education (CSE) is responsible for determining whether a student is eligible to participate in NYSAA. At each annual review meeting, the CSE must determine on an individual basis whether the student will participate in:

- the State’s general assessment with or without accommodations;
- the State’s alternate assessment with or without accommodations; or
- a combination of the State’s general assessment for some content areas and the State’s alternate assessment for other content areas.

The CSE must ensure that decisions regarding participation in the State testing program are not based exclusively on category of disability, language differences, excessive or extended absences, cultural or environmental factors, previous low academic achievement, or previous need for accommodations to participate in State or district-wide assessments.

Only students with severe cognitive disabilities are eligible for the NYSAA. The CSE must determine annually whether a student with a severe cognitive disability is eligible to take the NYSAA based on the following criteria:

- the student has a severe cognitive disability and significant deficits in communication/language and significant deficits in adaptive behavior;
- the student requires a highly specialized educational program that facilitates the acquisition, application, and transfer of skills across natural environments (home, school, community, and/or workplace);
- the student requires educational support systems, such as assistive technology, personal care services, health/medical services, or behavioral intervention.

In some cases, a student who has a severe cognitive disability, as defined in 8 NYCRR section 100.1(t)(2)(iv), may be recommended by the CSE to participate in NYSAA only for selected assessment area(s), such as mathematics, based on such student’s unique individual needs. The CSE may determine that the student can achieve the NYS standards for all students for the other assessment area(s) and recommend such student participate in NYS’s general statewide assessment program in those area(s). (State data shows very few instances when this has occurred in the past.)

How must a student’s participation in NYSAA be documented in his or her individualized education program (IEP)?

If the CSE determines that the student will participate in an alternate assessment on a particular State or district-wide assessment of student achievement, the student’s IEP must indicate this and provide a statement of why the student cannot participate in the regular assessment and why the particular alternate assessment is appropriate for the student. For example, the IEP of a student with a severe cognitive disability who meets the criteria for participation in NYSAA would indicate that the student will be assessed using NYSAA because the student has a severe cognitive disability, significant deficits in communication/language and adaptive behavior; requires a highly specialized educational program that facilitates the acquisition, application, and transfer of skills across natural environments (home, school, community, and/or workplace); and requires educational
Support systems including assistive technology, personal care services, health/medical services, and behavioral intervention.

For a student who is recommended by the CSE for participation in NYSAA, each annual goal on the student’s IEP must also include short-term instructional objectives and/or benchmarks (measurable intermediate steps between the student’s present levels of performance and the annual goal). The student’s IEP must also provide a statement, as appropriate, of any individual testing accommodations to be used consistently by the student in the recommended educational program and in the administration of State assessments of student achievement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What should a CSE consider when making recommendations on a student’s participation in State assessments?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSEs must carefully consider which students should be included in NYSAA, as these assessments are for students with severe cognitive disabilities. Participation in NYSAA may have implications for a student’s participation and progress in the general curriculum. While students recommended for participation in NYSAA must receive instruction in the same State learning standards as students participating in New York State’s general assessments, they are instructed and assessed against alternate achievement standards that are at a reduced level of depth, breadth, and complexity. CSEs should thoughtfully consider how a student's participation in NYSAA will impact a student’s opportunity to earn a regular high school diploma. CSE meetings where transition goals and services are being developed must include a discussion with the student's parents of the student's progress toward receiving a diploma, and parents must be provided with information explaining graduation requirements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do parent's need to know about their child’s participation in NYSAA?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In accordance with ESSA, as a part of the process for developing an IEP, if the CSE determines that a student will participate in NYSAA, the student’s parents must be clearly informed that their child’s performance will be measured based on alternate achievement standards that are reduced in depth, breadth and complexity and do not meet the expectations necessary to earn a regular high school diploma (i.e., local or Regents diploma) in NYS. In addition, parents must be informed that in order to earn a diploma in NYS, students must earn required course credits and take required Regents examinations and that their child will not be able to earn a NYS high school diploma if they continue to participate in NYSAA in one or more subjects in high school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are there any limits on the number of students that a school district may recommend for participation in NYSAA?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESSA limits the number of students in each state who may take alternate assessments to 1.0 percent of all tested students in a given subject. This is to ensure that the vast majority of students take a state’s general assessments and only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities take an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards. There is no cap placed on individual school districts. However, ESSA requires any school district that assesses more than 1.0 percent of its assessed students in any subject with an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards to submit information to the state educational agency justifying the need to exceed the 1.0 percent cap.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What are the NYSAA scores used for?

NYSAA scores show parents and teachers how a student is progressing in the attainment of grade-level alternate achievement standards. These scores can help:

- Identify a student’s strengths and needs;
- Provide information to allow for meaningful discussions surrounding a student’s IEP;
- Set instructional priorities that inform a student’s functional and academic goals and short-term objectives; and
- Identify a student’s most effective method of communication across multiple settings.

Where can I find additional information on NYSAA administration?

Additional information on administering NYSAA to students with severe disabilities is available on the Office of State Assessment’s New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) webpage [http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/nysaa/home.html]. Information about NYS’s procedures for school districts that assess more than 1.0 percent of their assessed students in any subject with NYSAA will be posted at this site and on the Office of Special Education’s News, Announcements and Timely Information webpage [http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/timely.htm] when available.

Legal Reference

8 NYCRR §§100.1(t)(2)(iv); 100.3(b)(2)(iii); 100.4(b)(2)(v); and 200.4(d)(2)(iv), (vii) and (ix)(b); ESSA §§1111(b)(2)(B)(vii) and 1111(b)(2)(D)(I)-(II)

1 Please reference the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York (8 NYCCRR) for regulatory language. An unofficial compilation of these regulations can be found at the Department of State, Division of Administrative Rules [https://www.dos.ny.gov/info/nycrr.html].
New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) Participation Decision-Making Flowchart

Students with severe disabilities in New York State (NYS) may be determined eligible by the committee on special education (CSE) to participate in the NYSAA. Consistent with the provisions in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), NYSAA is an appropriate assessment for a very small number of students with the most severe cognitive disabilities. In conjunction with guidance provided in NYSED’s Eligibility and Participation Criteria – NYSAA, this flowchart should be used in the decision-making process to ensure that only those students with the most severe cognitive disabilities are taking the NYSAA.

Has the student been identified as a student with a disability?

YES

Does the student have a severe cognitive disability?

The CSE has determined, after considering qualitative and quantitative information related to the student’s skills (e.g., evaluative information, classroom data, anecdotal information) that the student has limited cognitive abilities combined with behavioral and/or physical limitations and requires highly specialized education and/or social, psychological, and medical services in order to maximize their full potential for useful and meaningful participation in society and for self-fulfillment.

YES

Does the student meet the following criteria?

- The student has a severe cognitive disability and significant deficits in communication/language and significant deficits in adaptive behavior; **AND**
- The student requires a highly specialized educational program that facilitates the acquisition, application, and transfer of skills across natural environments (home, school, community, and/or workplace); **AND**
- The student requires educational support systems, such as assistive technology, personal care services, health/medical services, or behavioral intervention.

YES

The student must participate in the general NYS Assessment Program with or without testing accommodations.

NO

The student must participate in the general NYS Assessment Program under standard administration procedures.

The student is eligible to participate in the NYSAA.

NO

The student’s parent(s) must be informed that:
- Their child’s performance will be measured based on alternate standards that are below the expectations needed to earn a regular high school diploma in New York State (NYS); and
- Their child will not be able to earn a NYS high school diploma if they continue to participate in the NYSAA for one or more subjects in high school.

In addition, the CSE’s decision regarding participation in the NYSAA was **not** based on the student’s:
- category of disability;
- language differences;
- excessive or extended absences;
- cultural or environmental factors;
- previous low academic achievement; or
- previous need for accommodations to participate in State or districtwide assessments.
The checklist below may be used in conjunction with guidance provided in the New York State Education Department’s (NYSED) Eligibility and Participation Criteria – NYSSA in the decision-making process to ensure that only those students with the most severe cognitive disabilities are taking NYSSA. The committee on special education (CSE) must determine annually whether a student will participate in NYSSA on a particular State assessment of student achievement (i.e., English language arts, mathematics, and/or science) and document this decision in the student's individualized education program. If the CSE indicates "YES" for all items below, the student may be determined eligible to participate in NYSSA. This checklist is for local use, only. Do not submit this form to NYSED. However, a copy should be retained in the student’s special education record.

**Student:**

**Persons Involved in Decision-Making:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligibility Criteria</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Comments/Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The student has a severe cognitive disability and significant deficits in communication/language and significant deficits in adaptive behavior.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student requires a highly specialized educational program that facilitates the acquisition, application, and transfer of skills across natural environments (home, school, community, and/or workplace).</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student requires educational support systems, such as assistive technology, personal care services, health/medical services, or behavioral intervention.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both qualitative and quantitative information (e.g., evaluative information, classroom data, anecdotal information) have been considered to inform decisions on the above-listed criteria.*</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Check the recommendation that is most appropriate in meeting the needs of this student:*

- The student is recommended by the CSE to participate in the general New York State Assessment Program (with or without testing accommodations) for:
  - ☐ English
  - ☐ Math
  - ☐ Science

- The student is recommended by the CSE to participate in NYSSA (with or without testing accommodations) for:
  - ☐ English
  - ☐ Math
  - ☐ Science

**Parental Understanding:** If my child has been determined eligible to participate in NYSSA, I have been informed of and understand the following statements:

- ☐ My child's performance will be measured against alternate achievement standards that do not meet the expectations needed to earn a regular high school diploma (i.e., local or Regents diploma) in New York State (NYS).

- ☐ In order to earn a diploma in NYS, students must earn required course credits and participate in required Regents examinations, and my child will not be able to earn a NYS high school diploma if he/she continues to participate in NYSSA for one or more subjects in high school.

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* The decision for the student's participation in NYSSA was not based on the following: category of disability, language differences; excessive or extended absences; cultural or environmental factors; previous low academic achievement; or previous need for accommodations to participate in State or district-wide assessments.
Parent Notification of Participation in the New York State Alternate Assessment (Sample Letter)

Date: ____________

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This letter serves to inform you that your child, _______________________, was recommended by the committee on special education (CSE) to participate in the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA), rather than in the general statewide assessment program, in the following subjects:_______________________________________________________________.

In making this recommendation, the CSE has determined that your child meets New York State’s (NYS) eligibility and participation criteria for NYSAA and that the general statewide assessment program is not an appropriate assessment program for your child to demonstrate his/her knowledge and skills, even with testing accommodations. NYSAA is part of the NYS testing program that measures student performance on alternate achievement standards in the areas of English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science for students with the most severe cognitive disabilities in grades 3-8 and high school.

Students recommended for participation in NYSAA must receive instruction in the same State learning standards as students participating in NYS’s general assessments; however, they are instructed and assessed against alternate standards that are at a reduced level of complexity. Your child will be assessed using the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) alternate assessment system. DLM alternate assessment is a computer-delivered, adaptive assessment system that measures student achievement of ELA, mathematics, and science State learning standards at a reduced level of complexity. This computerized assessment provides the opportunity to customize the assessment to the individual abilities and needs of your child.

Your child’s CSE, of which you are a member, will make an annual recommendation on whether NYSAA remains an appropriate assessment program for your child. Please be aware that NYSAA assesses learning standards that do not meet the expectations needed to earn a regular high school diploma (local or Regents diploma) in NYS. In order to earn a NYS high school diploma, students must earn required course credits and participate in required Regents examinations. Your child will not be able to meet the requirements for a NYS high school diploma if he/she continues to participate in NYSAA for one or more subjects in high school. Additional information on graduation requirements is available on the New York State Education Department’s (NYSED’s) Office of Curriculum and Instruction webpage (http://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/).

If you have any questions about your child’s participation in NYSAA, you are encouraged to speak with your child’s teacher or special education administrator. For questions on NYSAA, you may also wish to contact NYSED’s Office of Special Education Policy Unit at 518-473-2878 or the Office of State Assessment at 518-474-5900. Additional information on NYSAA, including A Parent’s Quick Guide to the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) is available on NYSED’s Office of State Assessment NYSSA webpage (http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/nysaa/home.html).

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,
TO:  NYSAA District Test Coordinators (DTC)
     NYSAA Building Test Coordinators (BTC)
     Directors of Special Education
     Directors of Pupil Personnel Services

FROM:  Steven E. Katz

DATE:  May 2018

SUBJECT:  Process to Medically Excuse a Student with a Severe Cognitive Disability from Participation in the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA)

This is to remind schools of the process to medically excuse students with significant cognitive disabilities from participation in NYSAA.

Under certain circumstances, a school administrator may grant a medical excuse from the NYSAA (DLM) testing requirement for a student with a significant cognitive disability. The State Education Department allows N Y S A A - e l i g i b l e students with significant disabilities to be medically excused when the student is too incapacitated to be tested because of an illness or injury resulting from a significant medical emergency, as documented by a medical practitioner. The medically excused option is reviewed by a school district administrator on an individual student basis. School administrators should work with parents to obtain documentation from a medical practitioner.

The following process needs to be followed for medically excusing a student: Students must be added to KITE: Educator Portal, then rostered to a teacher and the first contact survey completed. This results in testlets being generated. Once testlets are generated, they should not be opened. Instead, the teacher would notify the District or Building Test Coordinator (DTC/BTC) that a special circumstance code needs to be applied. The BTC/DTC would enter the special circumstance code one time per content area. Special circumstance codes can then be entered by the BTC/DTC under the Test Management Tab on the table where the TIP is retrieved. Documentation from a medical practitioner and of the special circumstance must be kept on file by the school district.

If you have questions, please contact the Office of State Assessment at 518-474-5900.
The New York State Alternate Assessments (NYSAA) in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Science are administered using the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) computer-based adaptive assessments. Those NYSAA-eligible students whose home language is other than English may face additional challenges with participation in the NYSAA. The New York State Education Department (NYSED) is following the recommendations from DLM regarding the provision of oral translation, as outlined in the current Test Administration Manual under Accessibility Supports (https://dynamiclearningmaps.org/newyork).

The DLM test system does not provide translated forms of the NYSAA; it is available in the English language only. Therefore, when testing English Language Learners in the NYSAA, it is permissible for a school to orally translate text that is visible on the computer screen into the student’s home language. In addition, for the writing question in the ELA Writing Testlet, English Language Learners (ELLs) may provide their responses in their home languages, unless exceptions are noted in the Testlet Information Page (TIP) or at the beginning of a test section. Districts and schools should plan for translation services, as they are responsible for the translation process and procedure.

NYSED’s Office of Bilingual Education and World Language (phone 518-474-8775) and the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Networks (RBERNs) can assist schools in locating people who can aid in the translations. A directory of the RBERNs is available at http://www.nysed.gov/bilingual-ed/regional-supportrberns.
Accessibility Supports


**Braille**

If a student requires braille, please select braille in the student's Personnel Needs and Preferences Profile and first contact survey located in Educator Portal. Braille should not be selected for emerging braille readers. Braille should only be selected if the student is proficient enough in braille to demonstrate his/her knowledge, skills, and understanding of the Essential Elements in the DLM alternate assessment by independently reading braille. Additionally, braille is only available at the upper linkage levels.

Where braille testlets are not provided, test administrators will use other approaches to deliver assessments to students who are blind or have visual impairments. For more information, see the Accessibility Manual at: [https://dynamiclearningmaps.org/newyork](https://dynamiclearningmaps.org/newyork)

Contact NYSED at 518-474-5900 or send an email to EMSCASSESINFO@nysed.gov if you need Braille assistance.

Please be advised that the final date to select braille and contact NYSED regarding braille is 02/07/2020.

**Language Translation**

Unless exceptions are noted on the Testlet Information Page (TIP) or at the beginning of a test section, the text can be translated, and the students’ answers accepted in English or their own native language. The school is responsible for the translation process and procedure for the DLM assessments.