

DYNAMIC[®]
LEARNING MAPS

ACCESSIBILITY MANUAL 2022–2023

ELA, MATHEMATICS, AND SCIENCE

Publication Date: 07/01/2022

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.

Dynamic Learning Maps® Consortium. (2022). *Accessibility manual for the Dynamic Learning Maps® alternate assessment, 2022–2023*. Lawrence, KS.

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® (DLM®) webpage do not lead to solutions, these contacts can provide additional support (Table 1).

HINT: Print this page and keep it handy!

Table 1
Additional Supports for Users

Local Technology Representative	State Education Agency	The DLM Service Desk* 1-855-277-9751 (toll-free) or DLM-support@ku.edu
Kite® Student Portal installation General computer support Internet availability Display resolution Issues with sound, headphones, speakers, etc.	How to use Student Portal and Educator Portal Training requirements Assessment questions Assessment scheduling Test invalidation requirements Student Individualized Education Program (IEP) requirements Test window dates, extensions, requirements, etc. Testlet resets (may take up to 72 hours)	Data issues (rosters, enrollment, etc.)

WHEN CONTACTING THE DLM SERVICE DESK

- **Do not send any Personally Identifiable Information (PII)** for a student via email or Live Chat in Educator Portal. 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 or sent via Live Chat 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 (include the testlet number if applicable to the problem)

ACCESSIBILITY MANUAL 2022–2023

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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 Alternate Assessment System.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Additional procedural information on 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 <https://dynamiclearningmaps.org>.

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

WHAT'S NEW IN THIS VERSION

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

Table 2

Changes in this Version of the Manual

Topic	Starting Page
Update about braille forms available for DLM alternate assessments	23

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

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 subjects in grades 3–8 and high school. The department of education in each state determines the subjects and grades to assess. The DLM Alternate Assessment 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 test administrators must adhere to the highest levels of integrity when 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 the supports needed for each student.

ACCESSIBILITY BY DESIGN

ACCESSIBLE CONTENT

Accessible content is essential to student success. Member states and staff of the Dynamic Learning Maps® (DLM®) Alternate Assessment Consortium worked together to develop assessments at various complexity levels by using an appropriate vocabulary level and by creating item-writing guidelines based on Universal Design for Learning.

Universal Design for Learning is a scientifically valid framework for guiding educational practices for all students, including students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and students who have limited English proficiency (Higher Education Opportunity Act, 2008). The framework enables students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills while allowing flexibility in the way they respond. The framework engages the content, maintains high achievement expectations, and reduces barriers in instruction while providing appropriate challenges and supports. 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 that is enriched and enhanced with the use of technology for assessment administration.

The technology used for the assessments is an online testing interface, the Kite® Suite. Two parts of the Kite Suite used for the DLM alternate assessments are Educator Portal, where educators perform their administrative tasks, and Student Portal, where students are assessed. The administrative work must be completed before students can be administered assessments in Student Portal. The assessments are at grade level but are at a reduced depth, breadth, and level of complexity while maintaining an appropriate balance of academic challenge and access to the content. This balance is determined from information about the student provided by the test administrator in a collection tool in Educator Portal called the First Contact survey.

The First Contact survey includes information about the student's communication method, any assistive technology devices the student might use, motor and sensory impairments the student may have, and the student's academic performance. Some items from the First Contact survey are used to link the student with assessments that are at the most appropriate level of complexity in each subject. The DLM assessments are known as testlets.

In the DLM alternate assessment, a testlet is a grouping of three to nine items, depending on the subject, and the testlets are built to show the relationships between the knowledge and skills necessary to learn the information in the DLM standards called the Essential Elements.

Essential Elements are specific statements of knowledge and skills that are linked to each state's general education content standards. Each testlet assesses one Essential Element, except for the writing testlet, which assesses all writing Essential Elements in one testlet. The tested Essential Elements for each subject are called the blueprints and are listed on each state's DLM webpage. Every Essential Element is also broken down into individual skills for instruction and assessment.

ACCESSIBLE CONTENT FOR ELA AND MATHEMATICS

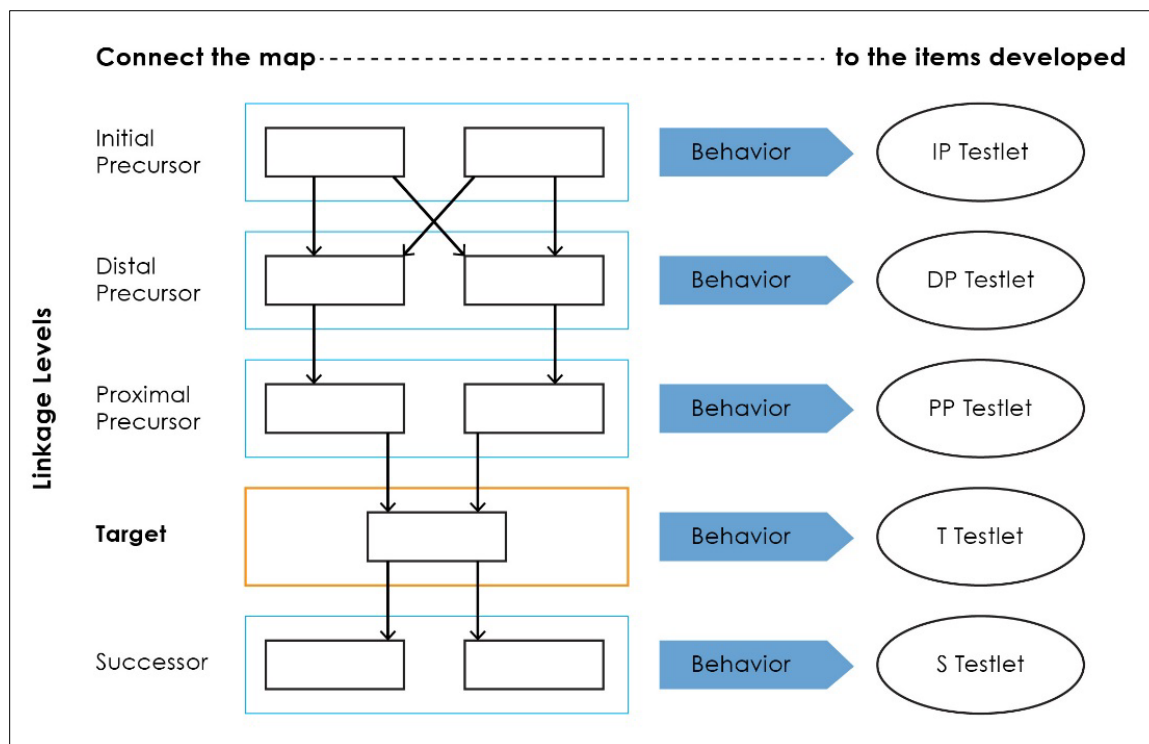
Both English language arts (ELA) and mathematics have a fully developed learning map model used for assessments. Each map contains thousands of skills that are called nodes. Each map has small sections with one or more related nodes that represent critical concepts or skills needed to learn the Essential Elements for the subject. These small sections are at different levels of complexity called linkage levels. The DLM alternate assessment provides testlets for ELA and mathematics at five linkage levels.

The Target linkage level is based on nodes that align to the knowledge and skills described in the Essential Element, which indicate a student's performance in relationship to the grade-level target. 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.

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

Two additional linkage levels, the Distal Precursor and the Proximal Precursor, reflect nodes along the multiple pathways in the learning map model between the Initial Precursor and the Target linkage levels. Finally, testlets at the Successor linkage level give students the opportunity to take the next step beyond the expectations described by the Essential Element. These five linkage levels identify significant milestones, as demonstrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Linkage levels determine testlet development content.



Note: IP = Initial Precursor; DP = Distal Precursor; PP = Proximal Precursor; T = Target; S = Successor.

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 at this time. Therefore, some differences occur between science and ELA and mathematics.

Science Essential Elements have three linkage levels that indicate a student's performance in relationship to the grade-level target. The Target linkage level is the highest linkage level in science. Science does not have a Successor linkage level currently. Testlets at the Target linkage level are written at the level of the Essential Element and align to each state's grade-level standards.

Two other linkage levels are lower in depth, breadth, and complexity than the Target. 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 science standards. Foundational 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 the testlet in Student Portal.

The Precursor linkage level is between the Initial linkage level and the Target linkage level and identifies significant milestones on the way to the knowledge and skills described by the Essential Element. Information gathered from the First Contact survey and student performance determines the science linkage levels that are most accessible and appropriate for each student.

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

Go to your state's webpage to determine if your state tests in DLM science.

TESTLET DESIGN—THE ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY

Testlet structure differs slightly between subjects 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

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

During a reading testlet, students participate in two readings of a text. The first reading is a shared reading activity that familiarizes students with the entire text and serves as an engagement activity. The second reading includes items that are either embedded within the text or sometimes placed at the end of the text. Embedded items are most often used because they reduce cognitive load and reliance on long-term memory.

During writing assessments, the test administrator follows a standardized procedure. The student selects and writes about a topic, which serves as the engagement activity. The test administrator observes the student's writing and then responds to items about their observations. Thorough information about the writing assessment is in the TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL for each state.

MATHEMATICS ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Mathematics testlets begin with an engagement activity. It is designed to activate prior knowledge, prepare students for the cognitive process required in the items, and provide a context for the items. The engagement activity does not include any items or require any

responses. Mathematics testlets are built around a common scenario to investigate related facets of a student's understanding of the targeted content.

SCIENCE ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Science testlets begin with an engagement activity that can be one of four types:

- The first type of engagement activity is simply a single screen with one or two pictures along with a short sentence that introduces the science topic to be assessed. The items in this testlet will not assess the engagement screen itself but will assess the Essential Element topic.
- A second type of engagement activity describes a scenario, which taps prior knowledge or experience, introduces the concept to be addressed, and provides context for the items. The items in this testlet type will assess information in the engagement activity and in the Essential Element topic.
- A third type of engagement activity may be designed around a science story featuring an experiment or classroom activity that is presented twice, with items embedded within the second presentation of the activity or at the end of the second presentation. The items in this testlet type will assess information in the engagement activity and in the Essential Element topic.

The fourth type of engagement activity is a short silent video (up to 30 seconds) and is only found in the upper grade bands and the upper linkage levels. Students will access the short video and then respond to three items that include still-frame photos from the video.

NOTE: The entire video clip is completely soundless.

TESTLET ITEM DESIGN

For all three subjects, testlets are delivered and student responses are collected in two general formats: computer-delivered or teacher-administered. The format is based on the information the test administrator recorded in the First Contact survey. Most testlets are designed for direct student interaction via the computer, and many students can interact with the computer independently.

The student can use special devices, such as alternate keyboards, touch screens, or switches. However, 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. Screenshots of item types in computer-delivered testlets are shown in Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4, and Figure 5.

NOTE: All science items are formatted as single-select multiple-choice only.

ITEM TYPES

Figure 2. A screenshot of a single-select multiple-choice item with images as response options. The student is to select the image that the text describes.

Which is a circle?







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 word in the list on the right.

Match the symbol to the name. One symbol will not have a match.


=	subtraction sign
+	addition sign
x	equal sign
-	

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 category box.


Sort the pictures below into **foods** and **drinks**.



Burger




Juice



Milk

Foods



Hot Dog

Drinks

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.

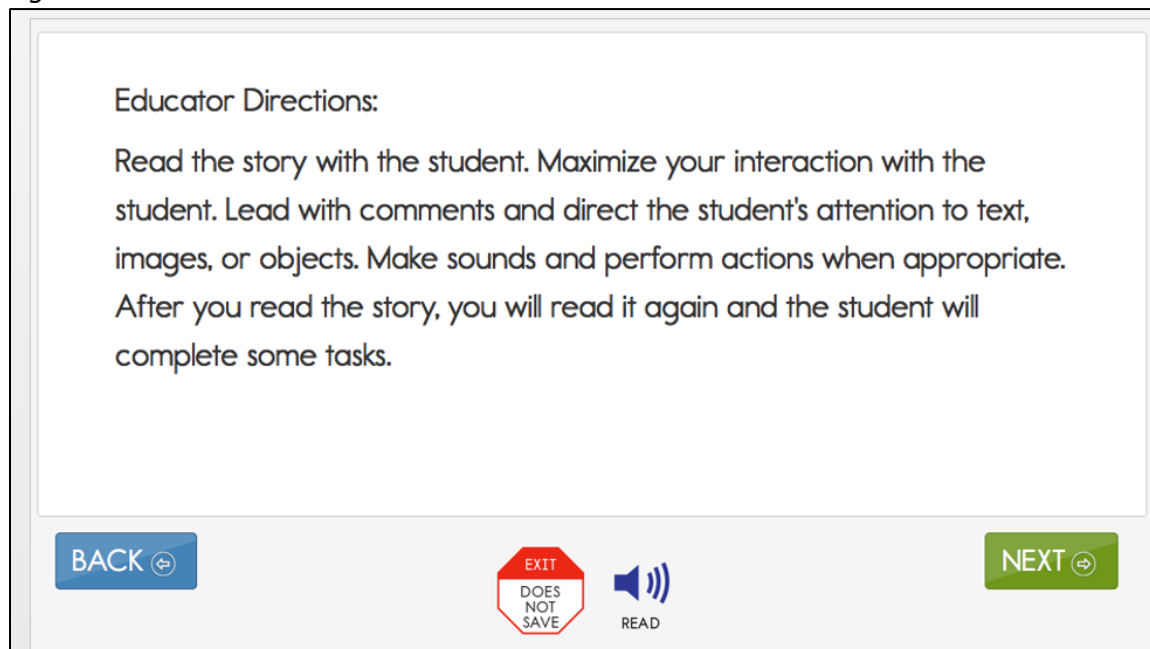
Choose the word that is a number.

Sam likes dogs. Sam has **two** dogs. Sam plays with his dogs.

After the student selects a response, the outline around the word, phrase, or sentence becomes bold and the outline is filled with transparent yellow as shown in Figure 5.

Teacher-administered testlets and writing testlets are designed so test administrators can administer them outside of Student Portal with step-by-step guidance provided in the testlet (Figure 6). For these testlets, the test administrator records the student's responses in the testlet in Student Portal.

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



CUSTOMIZATION FOR EACH STUDENT

The First Contact survey and the Personal Needs and Preferences (PNP) Profile are records of data in Educator Portal about the student that is entered by the test administrator. The system uses the data from the First Contact survey and the PNP Profile to ensure the student is provided the most appropriate testing experience possible. The data is used to:

- recommend or assign the complexity level for the testlets (e.g., linkage level)
- customize the accessibility supports for the testlets (e.g., magnification)
- assign the appropriate form for the testlets (e.g., braille)

Supports in the PNP Profile are listed under five tabs: Summary, Display Enhancements, Language & Braille, Audio & Environment Support, and Other Supports. Also, the student can use special devices such as alternate keyboards, touch screens, or switches to access the items.

After the appropriate supports are selected and saved, the test administrator may review them in the Summary tab (Figure 7). More information about the PNP Profile settings will be described later in this manual.

Figure 7. Screenshot of the accessibility Summary tab. Data are for a fictional student.

Patricia Lane

Summary | Display Enhancements | Language & Braille | Audio & Environment Support | Other Supports

Student Demographics

FIRST NAME: Patricia
MIDDLE NAME: -
LAST NAME: Lane
STATE ID: 6598745823
GRADE: Grade 5
GENDER: Female
DATE OF BIRTH: 03/07/2010

Current Profile Settings [Edit Settings](#)

Magnification
Magnification : 2x

Braille
Braille Grade : Uncontracted
Number Of Braille Dots : 6
Number Of Braille Cells : 80
Braille Mark :
Braille Dot Pressure : 0.5
Braille Status Cell : Off
Braille File Type : UEB

Since the selected PNP Profile settings activate the appropriate system accessibility supports in Student Portal, best practice is to select them **before** the student begins the assessment. When necessary, the test administrator can adjust the PNP Profile settings if they are not working well for the student or if the student's needs changed during an assessment window.

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.

NOTE: If the use of **Exit Does Not Save** is not allowed in your state, finish and submit the current testlet and then make any necessary changes in the PNP Profile immediately—before the next testlet is delivered.

2. The test administrator logs in to Educator Portal, goes to **Settings** and **View Students**, selects the PNP Profile for the student, and selects or deselects the desired support settings.
3. The test administrator **must save** the new selections before exiting the PNP Profile.
4. Table 3 outlines how soon the change appears in the testlet after being updated in the PNP Profile.

Table 3

Accessibility Support Delay Time after Updating the Student's PNP Profile

Support	How Soon the Change Appears in the Testlet
Alternate Form-Visual Impairment	Overnight, if available for the Essential Element at the linkage level being tested
Braille (EBAE, UEB with Nemeth code, UEB math/science)	Overnight, if available for the Essential Element at the linkage level being tested
Calculator	Immediately
Contrast color	Immediately
Individualized manipulatives	Immediately
Invert color choice	Immediately
Magnification	Immediately
Overlay color	Immediately
Single-switch system	Overnight
Spoken Audio	Overnight
Two-switch system	Immediately

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 Essential Element at the 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.

SUBMITTING THE FIRST CONTACT SURVEY

Each assessment year, the test administrator must submit the First Contact survey for each participating student. The assessment model being used by the state determines how the results from the First Contact survey will function.

For states using the Instructionally Embedded model:

- During the required fall window, the results from the First Contact survey are used to recommend a linkage level for each Essential Element from the blueprints selected for testing by the test administrator.
- During the required spring window, the results for any Essential Element that was tested during the fall window are used to recommend the linkage level for that same Essential Element if it is selected by the test administrator. However, if an Essential

Element was not tested in the fall, but is being tested in the spring window, the First Contact survey is used to recommend the linkage level.

- During either window, test administrators can accept the linkage level recommendation or choose another one.

For states using the Year-End model:

- During the optional instructionally embedded assessment window in the fall and winter months, the results from the First Contact survey are used to recommend a linkage level for each Essential Element that is selected for testing by the test administrator. The test administrator can accept the linkage level recommendation or choose another one.
- During the required spring assessment window, the data collected in the First Contact survey determines the student's beginning placement into the assessment. Both the Essential Element and linkage level are system assigned when the spring assessment window opens, and the test administrator cannot change them.

NOTE: For a Year-End model state, the First Contact survey must be submitted before the opening of the assessment window in order to have testlets available on opening day. Otherwise, the system needs 24 hours to assign the linkage level for the Essential Element.

Detailed information about how the First Contact survey can be found in each state's TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL in the Complete and Submit the First Contact Survey section. Information can also be found in the EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE and in the helplet video Completing the First Contact Survey and PNP Profile. Helplets are located on the [Educator Resource Videos for Year-End States](#) or [Educator Resource Videos for Instructionally Embedded States](#) page on the DLM website.

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 accessibility supports available for students to use in Student Portal.

- ☐ 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 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

Legislation focused on accountability and inclusion of all students for assessment has driven the need 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 et al., 1997). 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 2015.

PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities often 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.

1. The student has a significant cognitive disability. Review of student records indicates one or more disabilities that significantly affect intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior.
2. 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.
3. 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 neither allowable nor 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 the student receives
- educational environment or instructional setting
- percent of time receiving special education
- English language 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 or 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. IEP teams should refer to their 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 between accessibility supports that (a) can be utilized by selecting online supports via the Personal Needs and Preference (PNP) Profile, (b) require additional support materials, or (c) are provided by the test administrator outside the Kite® system. In Table 4, the user will find the supports that are in each category. If the state requires

documentation about certain accessibility supports in the student’s IEP, refer to the State Appendix in this manual (if provided) for more information, or contact the state department of education.

Decisions about the 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.

Table 4

Accessibility Supports of the DLM Alternate Assessment System

Category 1: Settings in the PNP Profile that activate supports within Student Portal	Category 2: Settings in the PNP Profile that activate supports within Student Portal in addition to supports provided by the test administrator outside of Student Portal	Category 3: Settings in the PNP Profile that require supports provided by the test administrator outside of Student Portal
Contrast color Invert color choice Magnification Overlay color Spoken Audio	Alternate Form-Visual Impairment Calculator Individualized manipulatives Single-switch system (PNP Profile enabled) Two-switch system Uncontracted braille (EBAE) braille for ELA with Nemeth Code for mathematics and science Uncontracted braille (UEB) for ELA, mathematics, and science Uncontracted braille (UEB) for ELA with Nemeth Code for mathematics and science	Human read aloud Language translation of text Partner-assisted scanning Sign interpretation of text Test administrator entering of student responses

SUPPORT CATEGORIES

Category 1 Settings in the PNP Profile that Activate Supports within Student Portal

Online supports include contrast color, invert color choice, magnification, overlay 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 on page 37.

Test administrators are advised to try out the supports in advance to make sure they are compatible and provide the best access for students. Usernames and passwords for the practice demo testlets and released testlets are available in the Guide to Practice Activities and Released Testlets on the [DLM website](#). Released testlets are like real testlets. They are selected from a variety of Essential Elements for ELA, math, and science, and linkage levels across grades 3–8 and high school. New released testlets are added periodically.

- **Contrast color:** Allows test administrators to choose from color schemes for the background and font.
- **Invert color choice:** Makes the background color black and the font white. Images display with a white background.
- **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 size. Scrolling may be required when the level of magnification is increased because the entire item may 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 default background color of the assessment is white. Test administrators may select from the alternate colors of blue, gray, green, pink, and yellow. Practice demo testlets have specific presets, but more options are provided in the PNP Profile and actual live testlets.
- **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. The nonvisual 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. The Spoken Audio feature highlights the text in yellow as the words are spoken. Therefore, overlay color in yellow makes the Spoken Audio highlighting feature hidden to the student.

Screenshots showing these supports begin in the Demonstration of Personal Needs and Preferences Supports: What Students Will Experience section on page 37 of this manual.

Category 2 Settings in the PNP Profile that Activate Supports in Student Portal in Addition to Supports or Materials Provided by the Test Administrator Outside of Student Portal

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

- **Alternate Form-Visual Impairment:** This form is a suitable additional choice for a student who can read braille. It is also suitable for a student who is blind but cannot read braille or who has a significant visual impairment. The test administrator selects Alternate Form-Visual Impairment in the PNP Profile under the Other tab. 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.

NOTE: If a standard form of the testlet is delivered, the test administrator is responsible for making the information accessible to the student using methods that have been used during normal classroom instruction.

- **Braille:** The DLM Alternate Assessment System supplies braille forms for some Essential Elements at the upper linkage levels.

The test administrator selects the appropriate braille form in the student's PNP Profile. Science braille forms are available in:

- English Braille American Edition (EBAE) for ELA, with Nemeth code for mathematics and science
- Unified English Braille (UEB) for ELA, mathematics, and science
- Unified English Braille (UEB) for ELA, with Nemeth code for mathematics and science

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. Braille is not to be selected for emerging braille readers. When a Braille Ready File (BRF) is available, the letters BRF will be indicated as part of the testlet naming convention (e.g., SP **BRF** SCI MS.PS1-2 T 10455).

Since braille forms are not available for every Essential Element at every linkage level, the DLM Consortium recommends also selecting Alternate Form-Visual Impairment.

Table 5 has information about the availability of braille forms for each subject, grade, and linkage level during the assessment windows.

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

Table 5

Availability of Uncontracted Braille Forms during Each Assessment Window by Subject, Grade Level, and Linkage Level

Subject	Grades	Linkage Levels	Window
ELA and mathematics	3–5	Target and Successor	Both fall and spring assessment windows
ELA and mathematics	6–8 and high school	Proximal Precursor, Target, and Successor	Both fall and spring assessment windows
Science	3–8 and high school	Target	Only the spring assessment window

Category 3 Settings in the PNP Profile that Require the Test Administrator to Provide All Supports Outside of 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 are always permitted to read the assessment aloud to students. Alternate text will include descriptions of graphics and alternate text descriptions of images. These are provided as additional pages after the main TIP.
- **Language translation of text:** Language translations are not provided via the computer. Test administrators may translate the text for students who are English language 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.

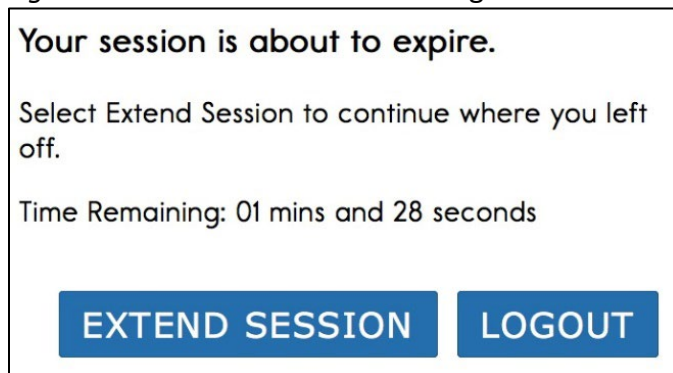
- **Partner-assisted scanning:** Partner-assisted scanning is a strategy in which test administrators assist students with scanning students' response options. Test administrators read and point to each response option, and students indicate when they are presented their desired response.
- **Sign interpretation of text:** Test administrators are always permitted to sign the content to students using American Sign Language (ASL), Signing Exact English, or personalized sign systems.
- **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 or form of communication (e.g., assistive device, eye gaze, gesture). Test administrators may key in a student's responses in Student Portal only when students are unable to record their responses independently.

SYSTEM TIMEOUT

The DLM alternate assessments are administered individually and are not timed. Any flexibility a student requires regarding the assessment time and location is permissible. A student may take as much time and as many breaks as needed, and work in settings that are most appropriate for them. During the administration of a testlet, Student Portal can sit inactive for as long as 90 minutes before timing out.

After 88 minutes and 30 seconds of inactivity in the testlet, the system prompts the student with a warning message (Figure 8). A countdown of 90 seconds begins, during which the student may extend the session or logout.

Figure 8. Kite Student Portal warning of session ending.



- If no activity occurs before the countdown reaches 0, the system closes the testlet and returns to the login screen. The testlet status returns to **Unused**, and the system retains no responses.
- If **Extend Session** is selected, the system disregards the idle time, closes the prompt, and returns to the screen where the student was working.
- If **Logout** is selected, the system logs out of the testlet and returns to the login screen. The testlet status returns to **Unused**, and the system retains no responses.

TESTLET RESETS AFTER AN EXTENDED INTERRUPTION

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. Each testlet begins with an engagement activity that is designed to activate prior knowledge, motivate the student, and provide 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 not available in the system include the following:

- **Sign language using human or avatar videos onscreen:** Most 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

Many computer-based supports can be used for the assessments to make them accessible to each student, such as various font colors or magnification sizes. In a student's PNP Profile, the test administrator may choose from several Student Portal supports available for a DLM testlet. The test administrator should select the 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, such as ones the student may enjoy using (e.g., invert color choice). Best practice is to have the student use only the PNP Profile supports or a combination of supports that the student has been using during regular instruction. Unfamiliar supports may be distracting and even detrimental during assessment.

DECIDING THE ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORTS THAT ARE NEEDED

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

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are also English language 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 when they use DLM practice activities and released testlets. These activities are intended for three main purposes:

- to help a test administrator draw conclusions about a student's ability to use a selected PNP Profile support during assessments
- to make decisions about the PNP Profile supports that best fit a student's individual needs and preferences
- to provide students with opportunities to practice using navigation tools in the testlets prior to the day of the student's first assessment

Released testlets are 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 THE 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 or when interacting in an online environment?
- Which current supports help the student with these difficulties when working one-on-one in the classroom or when interacting in an online environment? What kinds of instructional strategies (e.g., auditory, tactile, visual, or 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 et al., 2005)

Test administrators may need to amend a student's IEP to include 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 the computer are designed under the assumption that students can interact with the computer independently.

SUPPORTS: ALLOWED AND NOT ALLOWED

The following supports are allowed:

- adapted keyboards that include all 26 letters of the alphabet
- alternate keyboard, onscreen switch-enabled keyboard
- alternate pencils, including alphabet flip charts
- eye-gaze displays of letters
- letter-by-letter dictation of any sort
- Pens, pencils, markers, and crayons can be used for the writing product a student produces off the computer for the writing testlets
- tablet computer keyboards using word processing software
- traditional keyboards using word processing software
- white boards
- word prediction software

Word predication is an intelligent word processing feature that can alleviate writing breakdowns for a range of students by reducing the number of keystrokes necessary for typing words. The feature removes motor barriers to typing and reduces the gap between generating ideas and capturing ideas in writing.

Test administrators may also help students navigate across screens or enter responses on behalf of a student. The section Combining Accessibility Supports with Flexibility in Test Administration Procedures on page 29 describes additional supports that are allowed.

The following supports are **not** allowed:

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

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. 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 (Ronski & Sevcik, 1996, 2005). Given that students who participate in the DLM alternate assessment have universally impaired cognitive and language skills, ensuring that each student's understanding of pictures and symbols in the assessment matches the intended meaning 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 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 with 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 6 describes some common accessibility issues and potential solutions that are based on a combination of accessibility supports and allowable practices. The example solutions are for both computer-delivered and teacher-administered testlets.

Table 6

Common Accessibility Issues and Example Solutions

Accessibility Issue	Example Solutions
The student has difficulty interacting directly with the computer due to limited experience, motor skills, or devices.	<p>Navigation in Student Portal</p> <p>The test administrator may navigate the screens for the student.</p> <p>After the student indicates their responses to the test administrator, the test administrator enters the responses on behalf of the student.</p> <p>This table includes additional example solutions of how students may indicate response options.</p>

Accessibility Issue	Example Solutions
<p>The student is blind and typically reads braille.</p>	<p>Braille forms</p> <p>Braille forms of the assessments are available at upper linkage levels and only for some Essential Elements. Braille forms for science are only available during the spring assessment window. Instructions for how to access and prepare for administering testlets in braille are in the EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE.</p> <p>Alternate Form-Visual Impairment form</p> <p>When braille forms are not available, an Alternate Form-Visual Impairment form may be available. These forms are only available for some Essential Elements at upper linkage levels.</p> <p>Human read aloud</p> <p>The test administrator may always read the testlet aloud to the student.</p> <p>Familiar materials and tactile graphics</p> <p>The test administrator may use familiar materials or create tactile graphics in place of images that appear onscreen for a student. Familiar materials may be substituted for unfamiliar materials if the criteria of the item being tested is met.</p> <p>SHOW</p> <p>When the Educator Directions in a testlet use words like SHOW, the test administrator should present the content of the testlet to the student using methods normally used during everyday instruction.</p>

Accessibility Issue	Example Solutions
<p>The student has a severe visual impairment and needs the content to appear larger than the 5x magnification setting provides.</p>	<p>Magnification</p> <p>The test administrator may use an interactive whiteboard, projector, or any magnification device that works with the computer screen.</p> <p>Familiar Texts</p> <p>Teacher-administered reading testlets use texts that should have been used during instruction so the student can be familiar with them. If the student is accustomed to having the familiar text read from a paper copy, that copy may be used during assessment. Also, the test administrator may read the text aloud to the student. For links to printable versions of familiar texts, go to your DLM state page > Resources for Educators and District Staff > Educator Resources Page for ELA and mathematics > ELA > Familiar Texts. Choose a grade level to see all texts for that grade.</p>
<p>The student is blind and does not communicate verbally.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The student is blind, does not read braille, and uses only a single-switch system to communicate.</p> <p>The student is blind and receives testlets with pictures or manipulatives.</p> <p>The TIP does not provide alternate text to describe the pictures or guidance on how the test administrator can deliver this assessment.</p>	<p>Human read aloud</p> <p>The test administrator may always read the testlet aloud to the student.</p> <p>Familiar materials and tactile graphics</p> <p>Objects, tactile graphics, or tactile representations of pictures or objects presented onscreen as a concrete representation may be used. Test administrators may use individualized tactile representations with their students. Always access the TIP before administering the testlet since the TIP usually provides more information.</p> <p>Refer to sections Alternate Text for Reading Testlets, Retrieve the Testlet Information Pages, and Gather Materials in the TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL for human read aloud guidelines.</p>

Accessibility Issue	Example Solutions
<p>The student uses sign language to communicate and has limited proficiency in reading text.</p>	<p>Sign language</p> <p>The test administrator may sign the text, spell unfamiliar words, and adapt or interpret the language as needed. The test administrator may use signs that are familiar to the student.</p>
<p>The student usually accesses text with pictures. During instruction, the educator provides supplemental pictures as necessary, specifically for the response options, so the student can access the text. However, that practice is not allowed during the DLM alternate assessment.</p>	<p>Most Essential Elements that include a text focus on a student’s ability to make meaning from words. The text may be read aloud to the student by selecting the synthetic Spoken Audio or Human Read Aloud in the PNP Profile.</p> <p>Using picture symbols to support word reading is not allowed.</p> <p>Go to Supports: Allowed and Not Allowed on page 28 of this manual for more information about supports that are not allowed.</p>
<p>The student uses low-tech (not computerized) eye gaze to communicate.</p>	<p>Offline response options</p> <p>The test administrator may present the response options offline in an alternate format in which the student is accustomed. The test administrator will then enter the student’s selected responses in the testlet on Student Portal.</p>

<p>The student uses eye gaze or another means and can only indicate yes or no responses.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The student always selects the same response option (e.g., the first or the last option when presented the response options).</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The student can be presented only two response options at a time.</p>	<p>Alternate presentations of response options</p> <p>The test administrator may present the item and response options as follows:</p> <p>First, read the item and response options that are presented onscreen.</p> <p>Then, repeat the item and present response option 1, asking the student something like, “Do you want this option? Answer yes or no.”</p> <p>The student provides their response.</p> <p>The process is repeated for response option 2.</p> <p>The process is repeated for response option 3 until all response options have been presented to the student.</p> <p>If the student has indicated yes to all or to more than one response option, read the selected options again, following the above process until the student has selected only one response option.</p> <p>If the student has not narrowed the selection to one response option, the test administrator may try another approach such as the following example solutions.</p> <p>The test administrator may present two response options at a time until the student has eliminated all but one response option.</p> <p>To maintain validity, present the response options in the same order they are presented onscreen.</p> <p>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: option 1 or option 2?”</p> <p>Be patient to allow time for the student to select a response option.</p> <p>Once a response is selected, present that response and option 3. Allow time for the student to respond.</p>
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Accessibility Issue	Example Solutions
	<p>Then, repeat the above process until all options have been presented.</p> <p>When the responses have been narrowed to the final response, enter it in the testlet in Student Portal.</p>
<p>The student uses one or two switches to access the computer but is not 100% consistent or accurate in their use.</p>	<p>Use of switches</p> <p>The test administrator may use partner-assisted scanning to point to and read each response option.</p> <p>The student indicates when the desired response option is presented.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>The student needs special equipment for the positioning of materials to respond to items (e.g., slant board) or noncomputerized materials (e.g., hook and loop materials on a board).</p>	<p>Special equipment</p> <p>The test administrator may use the equipment and materials that are familiar to the student.</p> <p>The student continues to interact with the content on the screen.</p> <p>The test administrator may navigate and enter responses the student has indicated outside of Student Portal.</p>
<p>The student uses graphic organizers, supports, or other materials to complete academic work.</p>	<p>The test administrator may use supports and materials that are familiar to the student.</p> <p>The student interacts with the content onscreen, but the test administrator may navigate and enter the student's responses into Student Portal. Access the TIP for each testlet for approved and unapproved materials.</p>

Accessibility Issue	Example Solutions
The student has a physical disability that results in limited mobility. The testlet requires the student to manipulate materials.	<p>A student with limited mobility may use their current mode of communication to direct the test administrator to select a response option or manipulate materials on their behalf.</p> <p>The test administrator also may use the strategy of partner-assisted scanning for testing. The test administrator should select this support in the student’s PNP Profile.</p> <p>Note: Partner-assisted scanning is a strategy used outside of the system. It is a Category 3 support in the PNP Profile and does not make a direct change to a testlet.</p>
The student requires writing technology to complete the writing assessment.	<p>Writing testlets</p> <p>Students may use the writing technology or materials they normally use in everyday instruction to complete their DLM writing testlets if the supports include the use of all 26 letters of the alphabet to produce letters and words.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Also, students may not use whole word or sentence dictation or speech-to-text software.</p> <p>Thorough coverage of the writing testlet is found in the TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL.</p>

While allowed supports and practices during assessment administration offer a great deal of flexibility, some practices are not allowed.

Practices not allowed:

- Repeating the item after the student has selected a response. This action is considered prompting and may influence the student to choose a different response.
- Using physical prompts or hand-over-hand guidance.
- Reducing the number of response options or giving content hints.
- Modifying the content of a performance task in a computer-delivered testlet to help the student arrive at the correct response.

- Changing tone, inflection, or body language to cue the correct response when reading testlets to a student.

Go to Supports: Allowed and Not Allowed on page 28 of this manual for more information about supports that are prohibited.

OTHER ASSESSMENT RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS WITH COMPLEX NEEDS

Students who take the DLM alternate assessment can indicate their response through any means allowed. Sometimes test administrators need to think creatively about how to support students with different means of expressive communication. Contact your assessment coordinator for help with thinking through ideas for specific student situations and the methods that can be employed to provide access for a student with complex needs.

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) are included with every testlet and provide test administrators with information specific to that testlet, including exceptions to allowable supports, alternate text to use with human read aloud, and whether a calculator can be used. While a test administrator normally may use all selected PNP Profile supports, the TIP indicates when a support cannot be used for a specific testlet.

Every TIP contains alternate text for the test administrator to use for students who are blind or visually impaired. The only exception is if the alternate text would cue an answer (e.g., if a student is asked to identify which shape is a triangle). The TIP would not include alternate text that named the shapes in the response options. In that instance, the alternate text page would include “Do not describe,” then the teacher would rely on the BVI pages to have manipulatives ready for those students who are unable to rely on the images on the screen.

Test administrators receive the TIP in Educator Portal once the testlet is assigned to a student. After the testlet is administered, the TIP is no longer available. The TIP is a secure testing material. When the TIP is downloaded and printed, it must be securely destroyed after the testlet is administered.

Reviewing the TIP is critical for successful assessment administration, especially for a teacher-administered testlet: those at the Initial Precursor level for ELA and mathematics and at the Initial linkage level for science. A teacher-administered testlet typically has materials that must be gathered, and for science the TIP includes picture-response cards that must be printed. Best practice is to print in color.

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. Sample TIPs are available on each state’s webpage on the [DLM website](#).

Also, refer to the [Test Tickets and TIPs in the Spring Window for YE States](#) or [Science Test Tickets and TIPs in the Spring Window](#) (for IE states) helplets on the DLM website.

NOTE: TIPs for testlets at the lower linkage levels contains more information than TIPs for testlets at the higher linkage levels. For a testlet at the lower levels, the test administrator will likely need to gather materials in addition to printing science picture-response cards.

For the majority of computer-delivered testlets at the higher linkage levels, almost everything a student needs is displayed on the computer screen within the testlet. However, this is not always the case.

STEP 4: SELECT AND VIEW SUPPORTS IN THE KITE SYSTEM

DEMONSTRATION OF PERSONAL NEEDS AND PREFERENCES SUPPORTS: WHAT STUDENTS WILL EXPERIENCE

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 contrast color, invert color choice, magnification, Spoken Audio, and switch use. Also, test administrators can explore and try the PNP supports online using 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 the supports that will work best for each student.

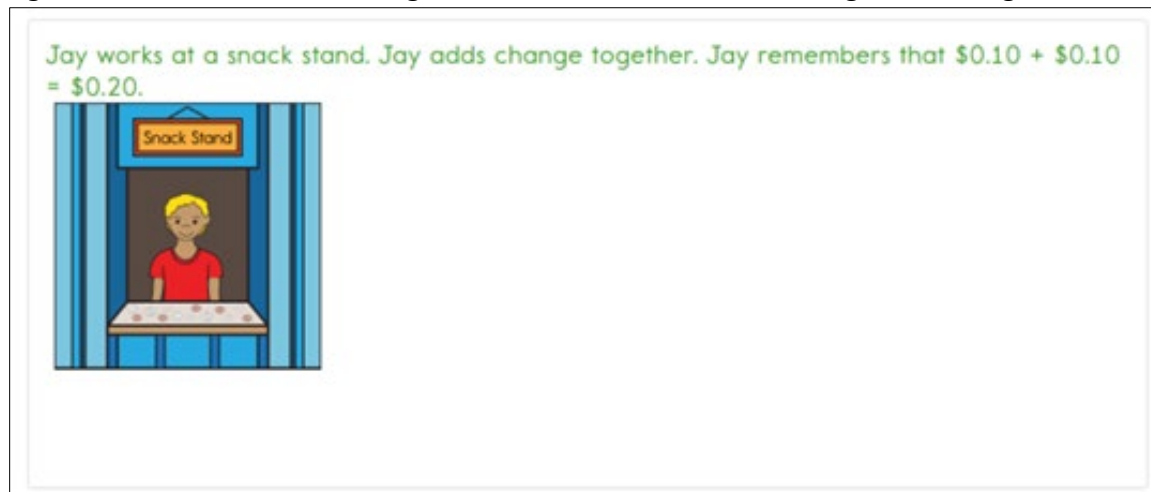
HINT: Combining contrast color, invert color choice, and overlay color results in a layering of the options, which is counterproductive and will not be helpful to the student.

Contrast Color

Contrast color allows the test administrator to change both the background and the font color. The background and font color options are:

- a white background with green font (Figure 9)
- a white background with red font
- a black background with gray font
- a black background with yellow font

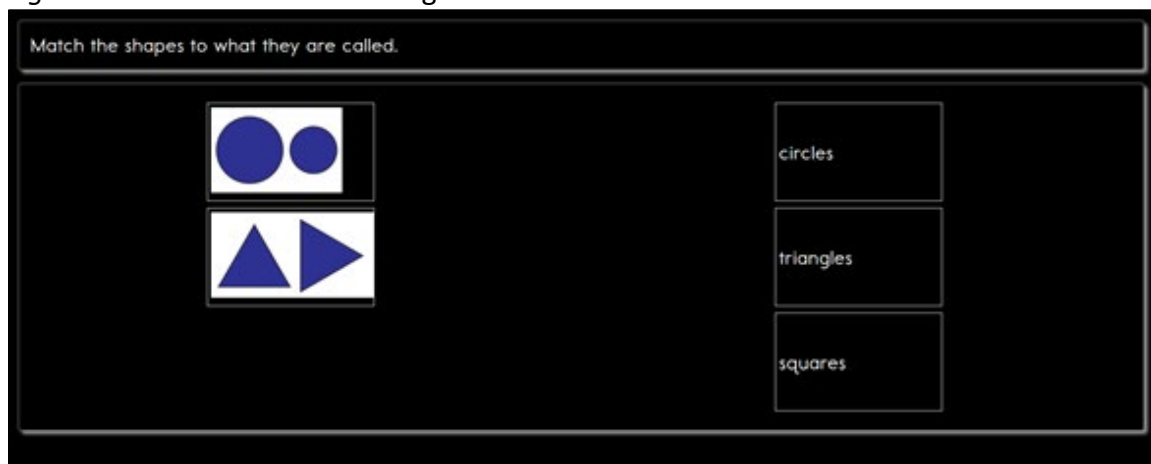
Figure 9. A screenshot featuring contrast color with a white background and green font.



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 (Figure 10).

Figure 10. A screenshot featuring Invert Color Choice.



Magnification

When test administrators choose magnification, the system zooms in on the whole screen (Figure 11 and Figure 12). The magnification options are 2x, 3x, 4x, and 5x. Depending on the amount of magnification that is selected, test administrators may need to scroll to the right or down to access the entire screen and find the **NEXT** button. Test administrators must keep in mind that scrolling may negatively affect the student's ability to access the assessment. Projecting the testlet onto a whiteboard may be a more appropriate option when a student needs a great deal of magnification.

Figure 11. A screenshot featuring 2× magnification.

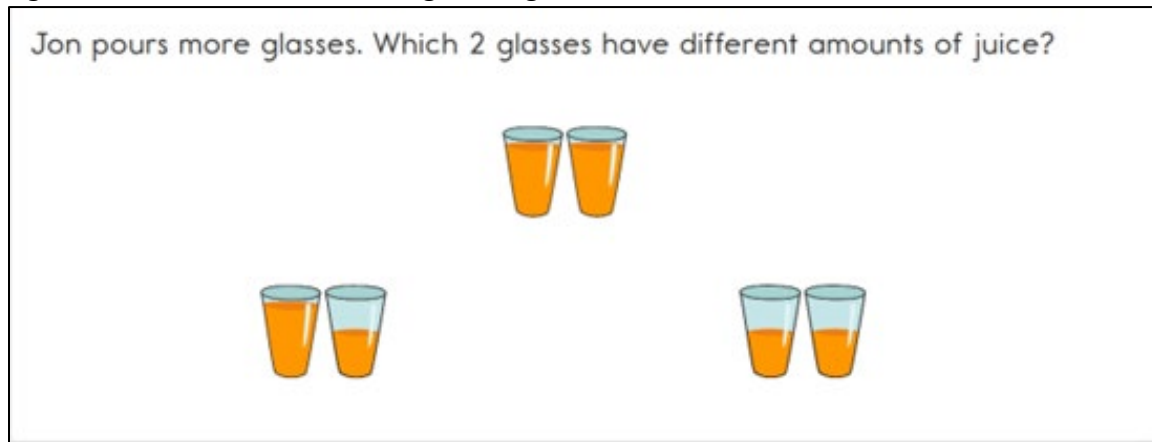
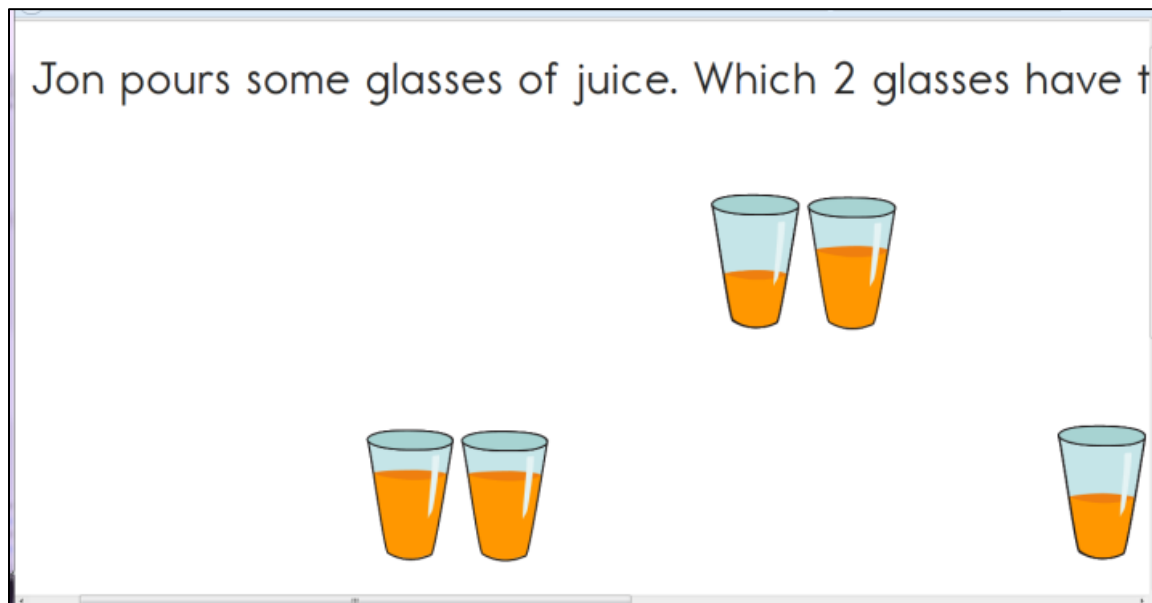


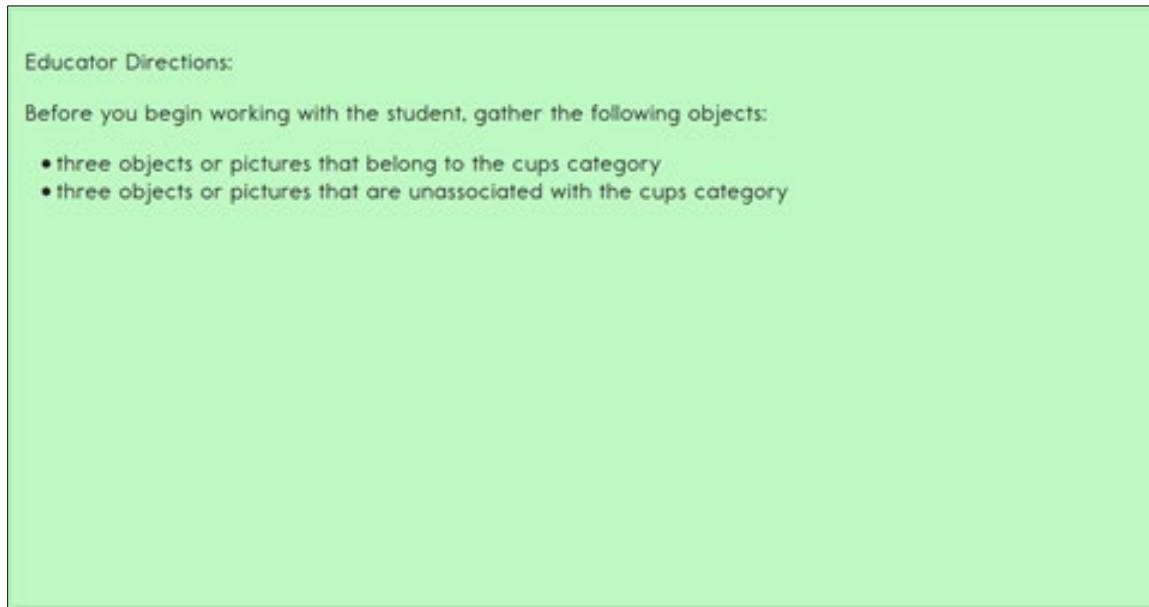
Figure 12. A screenshot featuring 5× magnification. Users must scroll both up and down and left and right because the size of the content exceeds the viewing area.



Overlay Color

Background overlay color options are blue, gray, green, pink, and yellow. The default background is white. The font remains black (Figure 13).

Figure 13. A screenshot featuring overlay color in green.

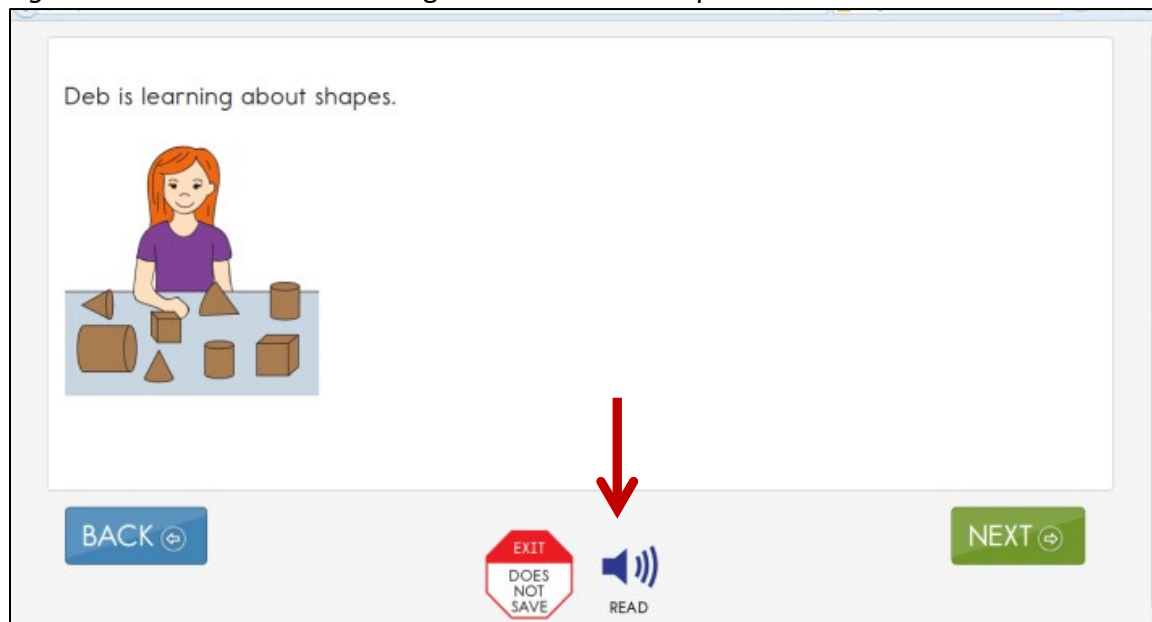


Spoken Audio

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, 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.

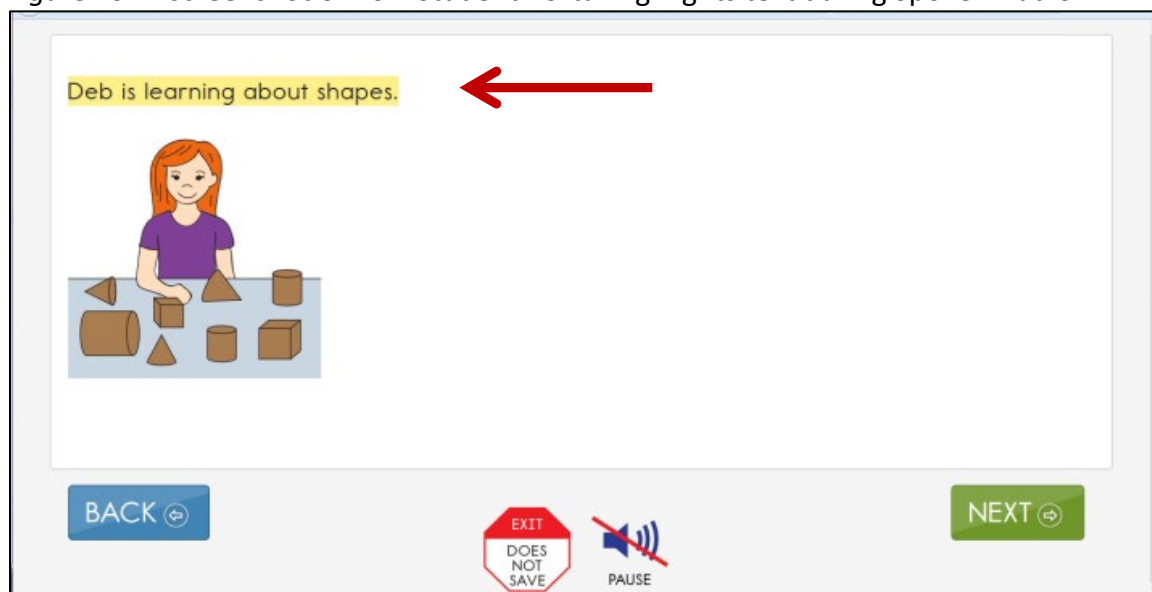
The **READ** button is visible at the bottom of the screen upon opening the assessment, as shown in Figure 14.

Figure 14. A screenshot featuring the READ icon for Spoken Audio.



After selecting the **READ** button, the Kite system reads the text aloud. As shown in Figure 15, Student Portal highlights the sentence being read. Different information is read aloud depending on which option is selected in the PNP Profile: text only, text and graphics, or nonvisual.

Figure 15. A screenshot of how Student Portal highlights text during Spoken Audio.



Switch Use

Table 7 and Table 8 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 interact with the testlets in Student Portal.

Table 7

Single-Switch Use by Item Type

Item Type	Single-Switch System
Multiple choice Response options are a selection of text or pictures.	<p>When Single Switch is selected, Student Portal scans through each response option and navigation button on the page based upon settings in the student's PNP Profile. The following can be selected:</p> <p>Activate by Default: This is automatically selected and cannot be changed.</p> <p>The Scan Speed (Seconds): The number of seconds the response option is highlighted before the highlighting moves on to the next response option.</p> <p>The Automatic Scan - Initial Delay: The length of the delay before scanning begins on each screen of a testlet.</p> <p>Value in Seconds: The length of the delay in seconds.</p> <p>Manual Override: The student initiates the scanning action on each screen of a testlet by pressing the switch.</p> <p>The Automatic Scan Repeat Frequency: The number of times an item on each screen is scanned before the scanning cycle stops. The number can be 1–5 or infinity.</p>
Sorting The student moves response options from the left side of the screen into groups on the right side.	<p>Student Portal scans through each drop zone and navigation button based upon switch settings selected in the PNP Profile as described above.</p> <p>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.</p>

Item Type	Single-Switch System
Matching The student matches response options from two lists.	<p>Student Portal scans 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.</p> <p>First, the student uses the switch to select a set of response options.</p> <p>Next, the system scans the response options within the set from top to bottom.</p> <p>Then, the student uses the switch to select the individual response option.</p> <p>Note: The response option remains highlighted as the system scans top to bottom through the response options on the other side of the screen. When the student uses the switch to select the matching response option, the connecting line appears.</p>
General information	In automatic scanning or manual override, the scanning stops after selecting a response option. The scanning cycle restarts from the beginning when the student presses the switch.

Table 8

Two-Switch Use by Item Type

Item Type	Two-Switch System
Multiple choice Response options are a selection of text or pictures.	<p>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.</p> <p>The student uses the switch set to emulate the Enter key to select a response option when highlighted to indicate the desired response.</p>
Sorting The student moves response options from the left side of the screen into groups on the right side.	<p>The student uses the switch set to emulate the Tab key to move from one drop zone to the next.</p> <p>The student selects a drop zone when highlighted, using the switch set to emulate the Enter key.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The student uses the switch set to emulate the Enter key to select an individual response option when highlighted.</p> <p>Note: The item remains highlighted as the student resumes use of the Tab and Enter key switches to select the target drop zone.</p>

Item Type	Two-Switch System
Matching The student matches response options from two lists.	<p>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.</p> <p>The student uses the switch set to emulate the Enter key to select a list when highlighted.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The student uses the switch set to emulate the Enter key to select an individual response option when highlighted.</p> <p>Note: 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.</p>
General information	After selecting a response option, selecting the Tab key restarts the cycle over from the beginning.

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

Figure 16. A screenshot featuring a single-switch and two-switch example with a highlighted BACK option.

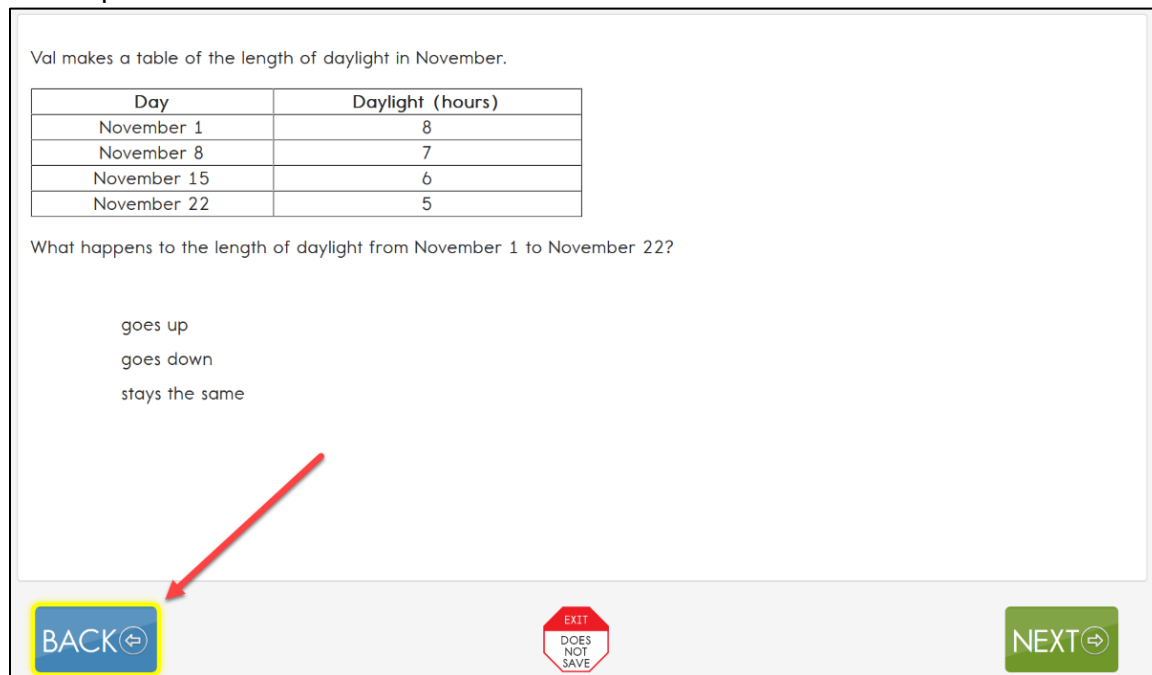


Figure 17 shows how the response options are also highlighted.

Figure 17. A screenshot featuring a highlighted response option.

Val makes a table of the length of daylight in November.

Day	Daylight (hours)
November 1	8
November 8	7
November 15	6
November 22	5

What happens to the length of daylight from November 1 to November 22?

goes up

goes down

stays the same

BACK

EXIT
DOES
NOT
SAVE

NEXT

HINT: When using single-switch or two-switch scanning, do not choose yellow for overlay color in the PNP Profile. The text highlights in yellow as the response options are scanned. Therefore, overlay color in yellow makes the single- and two-switch scanning highlighting feature hidden to the student.

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 materials:

- appropriate assistive devices for the student (e.g., switches)
- additional supports 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.

PREPARE FOR THE ASSESSMENTS

Help students prepare for the DLM assessment by providing instruction aligned to the Essential Elements and reinforce vocabulary found in the Essential Elements. Also, test administrators can help students develop comfort and confidence with the assessment format by using practice and released testlets. Resources for Educators and District Staff are available for each

state on their DLM webpage. Review the webpage menu tabs for Essential Elements, Familiar Texts, Writing, Collections Lists, Released Testlets, and Sample Testlet Information Pages.

In addition, the DLM Consortium 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 (30–45 minutes) and focus on a single topic. Information about these modules is available under the Professional Development section of the [DLM website](#). 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.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODULES FOR INSTRUCTING STUDENTS WITH THE MOST COMPLEX NEEDS

Professional development modules are available and are especially designed for instructing 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 Professional Development](#) website.

- “Beginning Communicators” describes symbolic and nonsymbolic forms of communication, the distinction between pre-intentional and presymbolic communicators, and additional sources of support for building communication skills.
- “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 the use of AAC.
- “Emergent Writing” describes alternate pencils, how to support emergent writers, what students learn during the emergent writing stage, and analyzed samples of emergent writing.
- “Forms of Number” focuses on three representational forms of number: concrete quantity, pictorial quantity, and symbol and numeral quantity, and how all three of these forms support a student in developing number sense.
- “Predictable Chart Writing” focuses on what predictable chart writing is and why it is important for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Participants will examine student and teacher roles and how predictable chart writing can be adapted to meet the needs of students.
- “Shared Reading” describes shared reading, which is a reading approach that emphasizes interaction and engagement with books. In the DLM alternate assessment for ELA, students frequently engage in a shared reading of a text before rereading a text to respond to questions.
- “Speaking and Listening” addresses speaking and listening in the broader context of expressive and receptive communication for students with significant cognitive disabilities. The content in this module is important to understand the DLM Essential Elements in Speaking and Listening and across all the strands of Essential Elements in ELA.
- “Symbols” is an overview of symbols to support communication and interaction. The module also describes the use of symbols and photographs in text.

- “Unitizing” focuses on understanding units or groupings to help students develop a strategic use of units to deal with quantities and problem solving.
- “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.

Also, three other modules can be useful:

- “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.
- “Patterns and Sequence” discusses recognizing and creating patterns as a basic mathematics skill, upon which many mathematical concepts are established, and uses repetition with variety to support a student’s understanding of patterns.
- “Perimeter, Volume, and Mass” focuses on the basic concepts of perimeter, volume, and mass.

STEP 6: EVALUATE THE ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORTS USED AFTER ASSESSMENTS

After the student completes all testlets during the assessment window, test administrators and IEP teams evaluate the overall use of accessibility supports. Test administrators become better informed and can 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.

1. Which accessibility supports did the student use during instruction and assessment?
2. What were the results of classroom assignments and assessments when accessibility supports were used compared to when they were not used?
3. If a student did not meet the expected level of performance, was the expectation not met because the student did not have access to necessary instruction, not receive the appropriate supports, or the use of inappropriate accessibility supports?
4. As perceived by the student, how well did the accessibility supports work?
5. Which combinations of accessibility supports seemed to be effective?
6. What difficulties, if any, were encountered in using the accessibility supports?
7. As perceived by test administrators and other observers, how well did the accessibility supports work?
8. Did the student receive the accessibility supports documented in their IEP?
9. Are the selected accessibility supports appropriate for the student to continue using or should any be discontinued?

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GLOSSARY

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

Term	Definition
display enhancements	Options that change the testlet appearance on the student's device screen, including magnification, overlay color, invert color choice, and contrast color.
Educator Portal	Educator Portal is a secure, web-based application designed to aid teachers and administrative users in the administration of assessments, including student enrollment and monitoring or tracking results. Users can access Educator Portal using any supported browser via https://educator.kiteaai.org/ . For information on working within Educator Portal, access the DATA MANAGEMENT MANUAL and the EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE on the DLM website.
engagement activity	<p>ELA and Mathematics: An activity at the beginning of a testlet that describes a scenario, taps prior knowledge or experience, or introduces the concept to be addressed. In 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 without audio.</p> <p>Science: An activity at the beginning of a testlet that describes a scenario, recalls prior knowledge or experience, or introduces the concept to be addressed. The engagement activity provides context for the items. Some science testlets at the upper linkage levels include a short video without audio as the engagement activity.</p>

Term	Definition
Essential Elements	<p>ELA and Mathematics: Essential Elements are the content standards used for assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Essential Elements are reduced in depth, breadth, and the level of complexity, and they build a bridge from the content in the grade-level standards to academic expectations. They are specific statements of knowledge and skills linked to the grade-level expectations identified in K–12 grade-level standards for English language arts and mathematics. Essential Elements in science are linked to the National Research Council’s Framework for K–12.</p> <p>Science: Essential Elements are the content standards used for assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Essential Elements are reduced in depth, breadth, and the level of complexity, and they build a bridge from the content in the grade-level standards to academic expectations. They are specific statements of knowledge and skills linked to the National Research Council’s Framework for K-12.</p>
First Contact Survey	<p>IE Model</p> <p>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.</p> <p>In the fall window, data gathered from the core questions from the survey are used to recommend the linkage level for each Essential Element for all subjects. In addition to the core questions, data gathered from the science questions are used to recommend the linkage level for each science Essential Element.</p> <p>In the spring assessment window, data gathered from the core questions are also used to recommend the linkage level for any ELA and mathematics Essential Elements that were not tested during the fall window.</p> <p>In the spring assessment window for science, data gathered from the core questions plus the science questions are used to assign the linkage level of the student’s first science testlet.</p>

Term**Definition**

In both windows, data gathered from the core questions plus data from the writing questions are used to **recommend** the linkage level for the writing testlet.

YE Model

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

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

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

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

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

Term	Definition
Instruction and Assessment Planner	<p data-bbox="500 231 618 273">IE Model</p> <p data-bbox="500 294 1300 661">A part in Educator Portal where test administrators perform assessment functions for a student during both the required fall and spring windows for ELA and mathematics. 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 indication of mastery of an Essential Element at the tested linkage level and indication of when the blueprint requirements are met for each subject tested.</p> <hr data-bbox="594 661 1320 665"/> <p data-bbox="594 682 1300 808">NOTE: Testing science is optional in the fall window, and score results do not impact end-of-year Individual Student Score Reports.</p> <hr data-bbox="594 829 1320 833"/> <p data-bbox="500 850 789 892">YE Model and Science</p> <p data-bbox="500 892 1320 1245">A part in Educator Portal where test administrators perform assessment functions for a student during the optional instructionally embedded assessment window. Functions include selecting an Essential Element and linkage level for instruction and subsequent testing. Most assessment data about the student is provided in the Instruction and Assessment Planner during this window, including a mastery of a tested Essential Element at a linkage level. Score results are not used for the end-of-year Individual Student Score Reports.</p>

Term	Definition
instructionally embedded assessment	<p data-bbox="500 249 618 275">IE Model</p> <p data-bbox="500 304 1312 642">Instruction and assessment are closely integrated with assessment functions being performed throughout instruction in both the required fall and spring windows for ELA and mathematics. Functions include educator-selected Essential Elements and linkage levels for instruction and subsequent testing. Most assessment data about the student is provided in the Instruction and Assessment Planner during each window, including a mastery indication for a tested Essential Element at a linkage level.</p> <hr/> <p data-bbox="597 688 1268 850">NOTE: Testing science is optional in the fall window. Although a mastery indication is provided in the fall window, score results do not impact end-of-year Individual Student Score Reports.</p> <p data-bbox="597 894 1295 1012">Testing science is required in the spring window, but a mastery indication is not provided until end-of-year Individual Student Score Reports are published.</p> <hr/>

YE Model and Science

Occurs during the optional instructionally embedded assessment window in the fall and winter months where instruction and assessment are closely integrated with assessment functions being performed throughout instruction. Functions include educator-selected Essential Elements and linkage levels for instruction and subsequent testing. Most assessment data about the student is provided in the Instruction and Assessment Planner during this window, including a mastery indication for a tested Essential Element at a linkage level. Although a mastery indication is provided, score results do not impact end-of-year Individual Student Score Reports.

Term	Definition
Kite Student Portal	<p>Student Portal is a secure testing platform used by students to take testlets. Once launched, Student Portal prevents students from accessing unauthorized webpages or applications during testing.</p> <p>All students taking the DLM alternate assessment will have unique accounts in Kite Student Portal. Test administrators do not have accounts in Student Portal.</p> <p>In addition to operational testing in the Student Portal, practice activities and released testlets can be administered using Student Portal. The login credentials for the practice activities and released testlets are unique to each one. Access the TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL for more information about Student Portal.</p>
linkage level	<p>ELA and mathematics: A small section of the DLM learning map model containing one or more nodes that represent critical concepts or skills needed to learn the Essential Element. ELA and mathematics each have five linkage levels: Initial Precursor, Distal Precursor, Proximal Precursor, Target, and Successor.</p> <p>Science: An incremental level of complexity toward the learning target where an assessment was developed for the science Essential Elements. Science has three linkage levels: Initial, Precursor, and Target.</p> <p>Linkage levels for an Essential Element are always related directly to grade-level content standards but at different levels of cognitive complexity. The Target level is most closely related to the grade-level expectation.</p>
materials	Any objects, manipulatives, and tools used during an assessment. Materials Collection lists are specific to a window for each subject. The lists are found on each state’s DLM website under Educator Resources.
node	ELA and mathematics: representation in the DLM learning map model of an individual skill or conceptual understanding identified in the research in ELA and mathematics.
Personal Learning Profile	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.

Term	Definition
Personal Needs and Preferences (PNP) Profile	Student-specific information that informs Kite Student Portal about an individual student’s personal needs and preferences for each testlet. The PNP Profile includes information the system needs to make the student’s user interface in Student Portal compatible with their accessibility needs. The PNP Profile includes information about display enhancements, language and braille, and audio and environmental supports. Educators who know the student provide the information in the profile found in Educator Portal.
plan	<p>IE Model</p> <p>The test administrator creates a plan in the Instruction and Assessment Planner in Educator Portal during the fall and spring windows. A plan includes an Essential Element, a linkage level, and a testlet for ELA, mathematics, and science.</p> <p>During the spring window, a plan is not created for science. Instead, it is administered from the Test Management section of Educator Portal, and the system assigns the Essential Element, the linkage level, and the testlet.</p> <p>YE Model</p> <p>The test administrator creates a plan in the Instruction and Assessment Planner in Educator Portal only during the optional instructionally embedded assessment window. A plan includes an Essential Element, a linkage level, and a testlet for ELA, mathematics, and science.</p>
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 beginning part of the item that presents a problem to solve or an item to which a student responds. The stem may also include other relevant information in the item. A multiple-choice item is a common example in the DLM alternate assessment, consisting of a stem and a set of response options from which a student chooses.

Term	Definition
tactile graphic	Tactile graphics are a means of conveying non-textual information to students who are blind or have visual impairments. Tactile graphics may include tactile representation of pictures, maps, graphs, diagrams, and other images. The DLM alternate assessment does not provide tactile graphics with the testlets.
technology-enhanced items	Computer-delivered test items that require a specialized interaction, such as select and drag. A technology-enhanced item is any item that is not answered using direct selection. This item type is only used at upper linkage levels.
testlet	<p data-bbox="500 669 618 695">IE Model</p> <p data-bbox="500 724 1321 1102">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.</p> <p data-bbox="500 1131 626 1157">YE Model</p> <p data-bbox="500 1186 1321 1484">A short assessment that begins with an engagement activity and include three to nine items, depending on the subject. Together the items increase the instructional relevance of the assessment and provide a better estimate of a student’s knowledge, skills, and understandings than can be achieved by a single assessment item. Each testlet assesses only one Essential Element, except for the writing testlet, which assesses all writing Essential Elements together in one testlet.</p> <p data-bbox="500 1514 1321 1736">Testlets are delivered one at a time in each subject. They are either teacher-administered or computer-delivered and they are adaptive, except for the writing testlet, which is always delivered last and its linkage level assignment is not based on performance of previous testlets. More specific information is found in the TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL.</p> <p data-bbox="500 1766 599 1791">Science</p> <p data-bbox="500 1820 1321 1879">A short assessment that begins with an engagement activity and includes three to five items. Together the items increase</p>

Term**Definition**

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. All students receive nine testlets. In states delivering end-of-instruction biology in high school, students receive 10 testlets. Each testlet assesses only one Essential Element. Testlets are delivered one at a time, are adaptive, and are either teacher-administered or computer-delivered. More specific information is found in the TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL.

**Testlet Information
Page (TIP)**

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

The Testlet Information Page (TIP) for each testlet lists the materials needed or describes the attributes of the materials needed specific to a testlet.

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

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

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

DYNAMIC LEARNING MAPS APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: OTHER SUPPORTS

Table 9 describes options available under the **Other Supports** tab in the Personal Needs and Preferences (PNP) Profile in Educator Portal.

Table 9

Additional Supports in the Personal Needs and Preferences Profile

Other Supports	Definition
Alternate Form-Visual Impairment	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 unavailable, a standard form will be delivered.
Two-switch system	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.
Individualized manipulatives	Test administrators may use manipulatives that are familiar to students (e.g., abacus, counters, interlocking blocks, linking letters, unit cubes).
Calculator	Students may use a calculator unless the TIP indicates a calculator may not be used.
Human read aloud	Test administrators may always read the assessment aloud to students. When a student receives an Alternate Form-Visual Impairment form testlet, its TIP will include alternate text as additional pages after the main TIP for the test administrator to read aloud to the student. The alternate text includes descriptions of graphics and of images.

Other Supports	Definition
Sign interpretation	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.
Language translation	For students who are English language learners and whose best expressive 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 determines whether language translation can be used.
Masking	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.
Test administrator enters responses for student	If students are unable to select response options themselves, they may indicate their responses through normal response types and 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 record their responses independently and accurately in Student Portal.
Partner-assisted scanning	Partner-assisted scanning 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 partner-assisted scanning in PNP Profile settings.

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 WORKSHEETS FOR TEST ADMINISTRATORS AND IEP TEAMS

States may use these worksheets (Table 10, Table 11, Table 12) 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 Kite® system immediately, as do individual manipulatives and calculator use from Category 2. However, four of the Category 2 supports require 24 hours to update: Alternate Form-Visual Impairment, braille, single-switch, and two-switch systems.

Table 10

Accessibility Worksheet: Category 1—Settings in the PNP Profile that Activate Supports within Student Portal

Accessibility support	Setting selected for STUDENT NAME	Notes and evaluation
Contrast color		
Invert color choice		
Magnification		
Overlay color		
Spoken Audio: Text only		
Spoken Audio: Text and graphics		
Spoken Audio: Nonvisual		

Table 11

Accessibility Worksheet: Category 2—Settings in the PNP Profile that Require Supports or Materials in Addition to Those within Student Portal

Accessibility support	Setting selected for STUDENT NAME	Notes and evaluation
Alternate Form-Visual Impairment		
Calculator (refer to TIP)		
Individualized manipulatives		
Single-switch system (Access Profile enabled)		
Two-switch system		
Uncontracted braille: EBAE		
Uncontracted braille: UEB		

Table 12

Accessibility Worksheet: Category 3—Settings in the PNP Profile that Require Supports Provided by the Test Administrator Outside of Student Portal

Accessibility support	Setting selected for STUDENT NAME	Notes and evaluation
Human read aloud		
Language translation of text		
Partner-assisted scanning		
Sign interpretation of text		
Test administrator enters student responses		

STATE APPENDICES

DOCUMENT HISTORY

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

Date	Section Name/ Summary of Changes	Starting Page
07/01/2022	Update about braille forms available for DLM alternate assessments	23

2022-23 New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA): Dates to Remember

Important Dates to Remember

08/31/2022	Kite Student Portal Update to Kite Student Portal for 2022-23.
09/12/2022	ELA, Math, & Science Instructionally Embedded Assessment opens. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 09/12/2022-02/22/2023 • 12/22/2022-01/02/2023 window closed
10/03/2022	Moodle Training opens.
10/31/2022	Printed manuals sent to schools.
10/03-11/11/2022	NYSAA-DLM Virtual Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual Training Window 10/04/2022-11/18/2022 • Prior registration required Live Q&A sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10/20/2022 12-1 pm • 11/17/2022 3-4 pm More information to follow. Virtual Training must be viewed prior to participation in a live Q&A session.
10/21/2022	Recommended deadline to complete review of user information in Educator Portal. Make corrections, add new users and delete users no longer needing accounts.
11/12/2022	NYSAA-eligible students need to be identified in the state data warehouse with the program service code 0220 to be included in the NYSED enrollment pull. Districts/Schools utilizing the Instructionally Embedded Window must comply with this deadline.

11/14/2022	NYSED pull of students identified as NYSAA-eligible for loading of enrollment file to Educator Portal.
11/16/2022	NYSED loads enrollment file to Educator Portal.*
11/23/2022	Rostering of students begins for entities relying on NYSED load of enrollment data.
11/30/2022	Recommended deadline to complete First Contact survey (FCS) and Personal Needs Profile (PNP) for participation in spring assessment to utilize the Instructionally Embedded Window.
01/30/2023	Parent Brochures sent to schools.
02/13/2023	Final date for Braille marked in PNP Profile.
02/20/2023	Recommended deadline to complete PNP and FCS for participation in spring assessment.
02/22/2023	ELA, Math and Science Instructionally Embedded Window closes.
03/10/2023	Shipment of Braille forms or embossing paper to school.
03/13/2023	Spring assessment window opens.
06/09/2023	Spring assessment window closes.
07/23/2023	Last day to download and save all Data Extracts in Educator Portal pertinent to district needs.

*Districts/schools can enroll and subsequently roster students prior to the NYSED load of enrollment data; they do not have to wait for NYSED to load the enrollment file.



Zachary Warner
Director
Office of State Assessment

June 2022

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

FROM: Zachary Warner

SUBJECT: Birthdate Ranges for Students with Disabilities Participating in the 2022-23
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 2022-23 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.

Birthdate	NYSAA Grade and Component	Reaches this Age Between September 1, 2022 and August 31, 2023
September 1, 2013–August 31, 2014	Grade 3 ELA and Math	9
September 1, 2012–August 31, 2013	Grade 4 ELA and Math*	10
September 1, 2011–August 31, 2012	Grade 5 ELA and Math	11
September 1, 2010–August 31, 2011	Grade 6 ELA and Math	12
September 1, 2009–August 31, 2010	Grade 7 ELA and Math	13
September 1, 2008–August 31, 2009	Grade 8 ELA, Math, and Science	14
September 1, 2004–August 31, 2005	Secondary-Level ELA, Math, and Science**	18

*NYSAA-eligible students who meet the age criteria for 4th grade will not be tested in [science in the 2022-23 school year](#). Instead, these students will be tested in grade 5 the following year (spring 2024). Do not roster students to 4th grade Science for spring 2023 NYSAA.

**NYSAA-eligible students who do not meet the age criteria above for the secondary level 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 secondary-level students who were expected to participate in the spring 2020, spring 2021, or spring 2022 NYSAA administration but could not do so are not expected to take the NYSAA before they exit school.

Reminder: all NYSAA-eligible students noted in the secondary-level age range above 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.

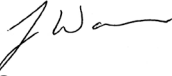



DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF STATE ASSESSMENT
89 Washington Avenue, Room 775 EBA
Albany, New York 12234

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
89 Washington Avenue, Room 301M EB
Albany, New York 12234

May 2022

To: District Superintendents
Superintendents of Schools
Principals of Public, Religious, and Independent Schools
Charter School Leaders
Special Education Teachers

From: Zachary Warner 
Director, Office of State Assessment
Christopher Suriano 
Assistant Commissioner, Office of Special Education

Subject: Administration of the New York State Alternate Assessment in the 2022-23
School Year

This memorandum provides important information about the administration of the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) beginning with the 2022-23 school year. Students eligible to participate in the NYSAA are assessed in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science using the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Alternate Assessment System. The NYSAA is part of the State testing program that measures student knowledge on Essential Elements, which are alternate achievement standards that are reduced in depth and breadth from the learning standards.

NYSAA in Science

In December 2016, the Board of Regents adopted the new [P-12 Science Learning Standards](#) which are based on the Framework for K-12 Science Education developed by the Research Council and the Next Generation Science Standards. The [DLM Essential Elements in science](#) are specific statements of knowledge and skills that are linked to the grade-level expectations in the Framework for K-12 Science Education.

Students participating in the NYSAA in science are assessed once each at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Beginning with the 2023-24 school year and thereafter, NYSAA eligible students will be tested in science in grade 5, grade 8, and one time in high school. As the Board of Regents and the Department work to [implement the science learning standards](#), **students eligible to participate in the grade 4 NYSAA in science will not be tested in the 2022-23 school year**. Instead, these students will be tested in grade 5 the following year (spring 2024). This is consistent with the implementation of the Elementary- and Intermediate-level Science Assessments.

NYSAA in English Language Arts and Mathematics

Students will continue to take the NYSAA English language arts and mathematics tests in grades 3-8 and once in high school. As in past years, these tests will measure the DLM Essential Elements in [ELA](#) and [math](#). The Department and DLM Consortium staff are currently working together on alignment studies to link the [New York State Next Generation Learning Standards](#) with the DLM Essential Elements. However, these linkages will not impact the student experience or how teachers prepare students for the assessment. The Essential Elements in these subject areas remain unchanged.

The Department and the DLM Consortium will continue to work cooperatively to ensure that students, teachers, and administrators have the necessary supports for successful assessment. If you have questions about the alternate assessment, please contact the Office of State Assessment by phone at (518) 474-5902 or by email at emscassessinfo@nysed.gov. Questions about special education should be directed to the Office of Special Education by phone at (518) 473-4818 or by email at speced@nysed.gov.

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.

For information see <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/nysaa/>



OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

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 NYSA. 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.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/state-assessment/8-eligibilityb-19.pdf) [http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/state-assessment/8-eligibilityb-19.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.nysed.gov/state-assessment/new-york-state-alternate-assessment) [http://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/new-york-state-alternate-assessment]. 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) [http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/timely.htm].

Attachments: [Policy Brief - Eligibility Criteria for Participation in the New York State Alternate Assessment \(NYSAA\)](#)

[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 \(Sample Letter\)](#)



The University of the State of New York
New York State Education Department
Office of Special Education

Eligibility Criteria for Participation in the

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) [<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://govt.westlaw.com) [<https://govt.westlaw.com>], 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;
- 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.

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.

What should a CSE consider when making recommendations on a student's participation in State assessments?

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.

What do parent's need to know about their child's participation in NYSAA?

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.

Are there any limits on the number of students that a school district may recommend for participation in NYSAA?

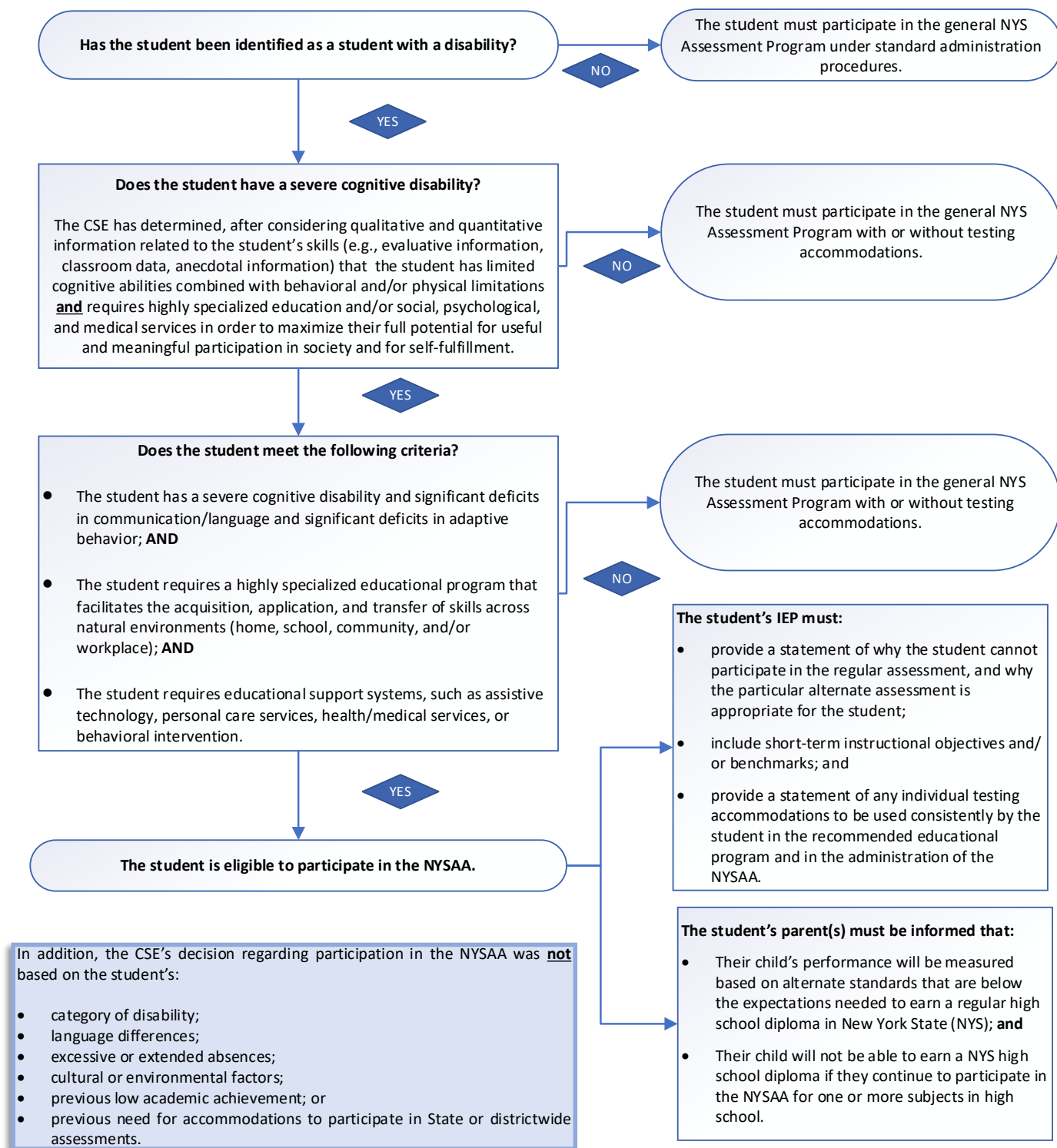
ESSA limits the number of students in each state who may take alternate assessments to **1.0 percent** of all tested students in a given subject. This is to ensure that the vast majority of students take a state's general assessments and only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities 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.

<i>What are the NYSAA scores used for?</i>	<p>NYSAA scores show parents and teachers how a student is progressing in the attainment of grade-level alternate achievement standards. These scores can help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<i>Where can I find additional information on NYSAA administration?</i>	<p>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.nysed.gov/state-assessment/new-york-state-alternate-assessment]. 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.</p>
<i>Legal Reference</i>	<p>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</p>

¹ Please reference the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York (8 NYCRR) for regulatory language. An unofficial compilation of these regulations can be found at the [Department of State, Division of Administrative Rules](https://govt.westlaw.com) [https://govt.westlaw.com].

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 NYSA. Consistent with the provisions in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), NYSA 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 – NYSA](#), 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 NYSA.



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

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:

Date:

Persons Involved in Decision-Making:

Eligibility Criteria	YES	NO	Comments/Evidence
The student has a severe cognitive disability and significant deficits in communication/language and significant deficits in adaptive behavior.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
The student requires educational support systems, such as assistive technology, personal care services, health/medical services, or behavioral intervention.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Both qualitative and quantitative information (e.g., evaluative information, classroom data, anecdotal information) have been considered to inform decisions on the above-listed criteria.*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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.

* 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 NYSA 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. NYSA 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 NYSA 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 NYSA remains an appropriate assessment program for your child. Please be aware that NYSA 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 NYSA 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/) (<http://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/>).

If you have any questions about your child's participation in NYSA, you are encouraged to speak with your child's teacher or special education administrator. For questions on NYSA, 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 NYSA, including *A Parent's Quick Guide to the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSA)* is available on NYSED's Office of State Assessment [NYSA webpage](http://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/new-york-state-alternate-assessment) (<http://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/new-york-state-alternate-assessment>).

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Steven E. Katz
Assistant Commissioner
Office of State Assessment

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

FROM: Steven E. Katz *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 NYSAA-eligible 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.



Steven E. Katz
Assistant Commissioner
Office of State Assessment

July 2018

TO: NYSAA District Test Coordinators
NYSAA Building Test Coordinators
Directors of Special Education
Directors of Pupil Personnel Services

FROM: Steven E. Katz *Steven E. Katz*

SUBJECT: The Provision of Oral Translations for the New York State Alternate Assessments in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science

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-supportrborns>.

2022-23 New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA): Braille & Language Translation

Accessibility Supports

Please refer to the New York-specific guidance regarding accessibility supports and testing accommodations at: <http://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/new-york-state-alternate-assessment>.

Braille

If a student requires braille, please select braille in the student's Personnel Needs and Preferences (PNP) 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 their 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>.

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

Please be advised that the final date to select braille and contact NYSED regarding braille is 02/13/2023.

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.

Specific guidance about language translation can be found in the TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL and on the NYSAA homepage at: <http://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/new-york-state-alternate-assessment>.