



- Slide 1. This training provides information for Maryland's test coordinators about the Dynamic Learning Maps[®], or DLM[®], alternate assessment in English language arts, mathematics, and science for spring 2026.
- Slide 2. During this presentation, we'll review assessment window dates, updates to the Kite[®] Suite applications, DLM assessment roles and resources, and Required Test Administrator Training.
- Slide 3. We will also review assessment design and delivery, monitoring the assessment, and protocols to use when contacting the DLM Service Desk.
- Slide 4. Maryland's DLM assessment window is March 9 through May 15, 2026. If you enrolled students prior to this training, we recommend that data cleanup occurs before the window opens to ensure the right students are enrolled and are rostered to the right test administrator for the right subjects. The data cleanup can continue throughout the window. Testlets are not delivered in Student Portal prior to the window opening.
- Slide 5. DLM-eligible students should be enrolled and rostered according to Maryland's assessment requirements. Grades 3 through 8 and 11 should be rostered for English language arts, or ELA, and mathematics. Grades 5, 8, and 11 should also be rostered for science. Grade 11 students should be rostered for the biology course. Grade 12 is an optional grade. When needed, Grade 12 students can be rostered to ELA, mathematics, and science.
- Slide 6. The next slides cover updates made to Educator Portal for 2025–2026.
- Slide 7. Multifactor authentication, referred to as MFA, was added as an additional layer of security for Educator Portal. After the user signs in to Educator Portal using their valid username and password, a six-digit code is sent to the user's email address.
- Slide 8. Once the user receives the code, it is entered into the access code field. Also, users have the option to select the checkbox for "Remember this device for 30 days." By doing this, they will not need an access code again for the next 30 days.
- Slide 9. NOTE: If the web browser being used is set to clear cookies each time it closes, or if cookies are cleared by the user at other times, a new code will be needed when signing in to Educator Portal the next time. To avoid this, most browsers will allow the user to enter a specific URL into an exceptions list under the Privacy and Security settings on the web browser of choice.

Review the Educator Portal announcement from September 26, 2025, for more information about the exceptions setting or contact the Service Desk for help.

- Slide 10. The Educator Portal home page was redesigned to utilize the space on that screen more efficiently. Important announcements now have more room to display without a lot of scrolling.
- Slide 11. A new value was added to the list of comprehensive races. The new value is #10, which is Middle Eastern or North African.
- Slide 12. Previously, when enrolling students using the Enrollment Upload Template file, the system returned an alert message when another enrollment record had a matching student first name, last name, gender, and date of birth but a different State Student Identifier, or SSID. However, the system still allowed the enrollment.
- Slide 13. Now, instead of an alert message, an error message is generated. The enrollment process stops, giving the data manager the opportunity to research the two student records. The data manager is directed to contact the State Assessment Administrator for help in correcting the data.
- Slide 14. The new error message provides the SSID of the existing student record, and then says, “A student record **for the current or a previous school year** already exists in your state with a matching first name, last name, gender, and date of birth, but a different State Student Identifier. Contact your State Assessment Administrator for help in correcting the data.”
- Slide 15. Sometimes a district needs a student to receive instruction and be tested in two different schools (for example, ELA and mathematics in one school and science in a different school). Dual enrollments are allowed when needed using the user interface. After entering the data again for the same student, when the user attempts to save the record, they will receive a warning message. They can continue to enroll the student by selecting Continue, or they can select Cancel to cancel the enrollment.
- Slide 16. The column headers and column order for all upload template files were reviewed and were edited to make them as consistent as possible. The extracts were also reviewed and given consistent field names and column orders, unless not applicable.

Use only the upload template files for 2025–2026. All others will fail.

Slide 17. A new field was added to the Add/Edit User screen. Now, a user's mobile phone number can be added to the user's account via the user interface or in a User Upload Template file.

Looking ahead to the future, when SMS becomes available, users can either choose to receive their MFA code via a text message on their cell phone or continue with email messaging.

Slide 18. The State Student ID was added as the first column in the Testing Outside Hours Dashboard.

Slide 19. Also, the State Student ID was added as the first column in the Short Duration Testing Dashboard.

Slide 20. Previously, a special circumstance code could only be applied at the test session level. A student had to be enrolled and rostered and their First Contact Survey had to be completed and submitted, plus a test session assigned, before a special circumstance code could be added.

Now, a code can be added at the student or subject level as soon as the student is enrolled. They do not have to be rostered or have a submitted First Contact Survey. However, your State Assessment Administrator must approve the reason for the code and only they can apply a special circumstance code. Contact them with your reason, asking approval.

Slide 21. The next slides will cover the science field tests for spring 2026 and the new science Essential Elements for spring 2027.

Slide 22. The 2025–2026 school year is a transition year for DLM science. Go to the Instructional Resources tab for Year-End Model States.

Slide 23. Here, you will find information about the science Essential Elements for spring 2026 and the revised and expanded science Essential Elements for spring 2027.

First, we'll examine the Science tab, which contains the original set of science Essential Elements that are used for the spring 2026 operational assessment testlets.

Slide 24. Several resources are provided, including Currently Tested Essential Elements for Science (with Mini-Maps) and the Science Blueprint Phase 1 with Biology.

On the left side of the screen, select **Collections** to find the Materials Collection list. Select **Testlets** to find sample testlets. Select **Instructional Activities** to find activities that support teachers who will be using the DLM

science Essential Elements during instruction, plus model activities for each grade span (elementary, middle, and high school).

Slide 25. Go to the **Science - Spring 2027** tab for the revised and expanded set of science Essential Elements, which will be the basis for the testlets in the embedded science field test in spring 2026 and the operational science testlets in spring 2027.

Slide 26. All students in all grade bands will receive four field tests for the revised and expanded Essential Elements that will be used for operational assessments beginning in spring 2027. These field tests will be available with the first operational science test. Test administrators can decide when would be the best time to administer the field tests. They can all be given at the beginning of the window, sprinkled throughout the window, or all given at the end.

The TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL, or TAM, has more information about how the science field tests will be delivered. In the TAM, go to Spring Assessment Window for Science 2026.

Slide 27. The spring 2026 field test testlets will have four linkage levels instead of three. Notice that the names of the science linkage levels match those for ELA and mathematics, which are Initial Precursor, Distal Precursor, Proximal Precursor, and Target. Science will not have a Successor linkage level at this time.

Slide 28. Next, we'll discuss specifications for this year's Required Test Administrator Training.

Slide 29. Required Test Administrator Training opened August 5 and closes on May 15, 2026. Test administrators will need an account in Educator Portal to access and complete the required training. Use the Training tab on the home screen of Educator Portal to access the required training.

Slide 30. New test administrator training is comprised of four modules that can be in a self-directed or facilitated format. A module can be taken as many times as needed until it is passed at 80% or better.

Returning test administrators have one self-directed module and have only one opportunity to pass it. If the module is not passed with the first attempt, the teacher is directed to additional required training before being able to take the post-test again.

Slide 31. The required training did not change for 2025–2026 except for the inclusion of a reminder on one slide at the end of both the new and returning training. The reminder is about the requirement to take all testlets on the Student Portal

app. The app must be downloaded and installed on all testing devices. Compatibility and download instructions are provided on the Kite Suite page of the DLM website. Browser versions of Student Portal exist but do not work for the DLM operational assessments.

Operational assessments are only loaded on the Student Portal app. Test administrators who attempt to use a browser version of Student Portal will not find any testlets available.

Slide 32. The DLM website has manuals, guides, short videos called helplets, and access to professional development modules that can assist test coordinators, test administrators, and technology personnel throughout the assessment window.

Slide 33. Manuals, guides, and documents that are referenced throughout this training can be found on Maryland's DLM webpage. The webpage also contains all scoring and reporting related videos and documents, and it links to the DLM Professional Development website. For quick access, bookmark the Maryland DLM webpage.

Slide 34. Teachers will find many helpful resources, such as the TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL, which describes in detail how to administer the assessment; the ACCESSIBILITY MANUAL, which details accessibility features and solutions for common student accessibility situations; the EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE, which provides step-by-step directions with screenshots for tasks teachers must complete in Educator Portal; and the GUIDE TO DLM REQUIRED TEST ADMINISTRATOR TRAINING, which provides guidance to teachers before launching the required training. On the Instructional Resources tab, teachers can access the test blueprints and the list of Currently Tested Essential Elements, which includes linkage level descriptors and the mini-maps.

Helplet videos are short videos that cover a very specific task, such as using Student Portal. For teachers and students who want to become familiar with testlets, released testlets and practice activities are available. Also, over 50 professional development modules are available to support teachers.

Slide 35. Technology personnel will find resources with information about supported platforms, Kite Client installation guides, directions on how to ensure local networks meet bandwidth requirements, and how to install a PDF reader on devices educators will use to access Educator Portal. If technology personnel expect bandwidth issues, school personnel should contact the state.

Slide 36. Many resources are also available for assessment coordinators. In addition to the manuals and guides for teachers that assessment coordinators will find useful as they troubleshoot questions from the test administrators, the

ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR MANUAL also provides greater detail and guidance on assessment coordinator responsibilities.

Slide 37. The DATA MANAGEMENT MANUAL is specifically designed for data managers and includes step-by-step instructions for each task along with screenshots.

The EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE includes step-by-step procedures for test administrators and the descriptions and the purpose of the extracts and reports in Educator Portal, which are used for monitoring purposes.

The State Organizational Table has school and district codes that must be used when adding users and enrolling students.

Several upload template files are available.

Slide 38. Additional resources for district roles are found on the website. The DLM Training for District Roles is comprised of short, interactive lessons for each of the roles described in this training.

Slide 39. The following section explains the design of the assessment.

Slide 40. The Essential Elements are the learning targets for the DLM alternate assessments. They align to Maryland's grade-level content standards for general education students. The Essential Elements provide a bridge from grade-level content standards to academic expectations for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

Slide 41. Each Essential Element has linkage levels composed of knowledge, skills, and understandings at varying levels of complexity relative to that Essential Element. Some linkage levels build toward the Essential Element, others address the Essential Element specifically, and still other linkage levels go beyond.

Slide 42. The assessment is comprised of short mini-assessments called testlets. The linkage level of the first testlet delivered is based on the First Contact Survey data, completed by the student's teacher. This ensures the academic content assessed is not too hard nor too easy, thus providing a student with the best opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do. After the first testlet, the student's performance determines the linkage level of subsequent testlets.

Slide 43. ELA and mathematics Essential Elements each have five linkage levels. The Target linkage level aligns to the content of the Essential Element. The three linkage levels that build toward the Target are the Initial Precursor, Distal Precursor, and Proximal Precursor. The Initial Precursor is the least complex and includes foundational skills. The Distal Precursor includes knowledge

and skills needed to reach the Target, and the Proximal Precursor provides access to the Target. The Successor linkage level progresses beyond the Target.

Slide 44. In the spring 2026 operational testlets, science has three linkage levels. The Initial linkage level is the least complex, and the Precursor linkage level is more complex than the Initial but not as complex as the Target. The Target linkage level aligns with the Essential Element.

For the field tests in spring 2026, each science Essential Element has four linkage levels.

Slide 45. For the field tests in spring 2026, each science Essential Element has four linkage levels that match the linkage levels for ELA and mathematics, with one exception. Science does not have a Successor linkage level at this time.

Slide 46. This next section addresses assessment delivery.

Slide 47. MSDE does not permit remote testing of the DLM assessment. All testing must be completed inside a classroom setting.

Slide 48. The designated test coordinator is responsible for gathering, editing, and uploading data in Educator Portal for users. Common users include educators, test administrators, and staff who need access to student data. A test coordinator is also responsible for enrolling students who take the DLM assessment and creating rosters, which connects students to educators for a subject.

Slide 49. Teachers must complete a few steps prior to administering the assessment. New teachers must activate their Educator Portal account from the email they receive from the Kite system once the data manager added them as a user. All teachers must complete the security agreement in Educator Portal. An important requirement is that the test administrator who administers the testlets **must** be the one to whom the student is rostered.

Slide 50. When a teacher activates their account, they are automatically enrolled in the DLM Required Test Administrator Training. The teacher is also responsible for completing the Personal Learning Profiles for each student rostered to them. The teacher then plans instruction and delivers the assessment to the student using the Kite Student Portal.

Slide 51. A student's Personal Learning Profile consists of the First Contact Survey and the Personal Needs and Preferences, or PNP, Profile.

Slide 52. The First Contact Survey and the PNP Profile can be accessed on the View Student screen in Educator Portal for each student.

- Slide 53. The Kite system uses the information in the First Contact Survey to determine the linkage level of a student's first testlet in each subject. After the first testlet is completed, subsequent testlets are assigned based on the student's performance on the previous testlet. Only one First Contact Survey is completed per student each year. Therefore, for a student who is rostered to different teachers by subject, the teachers should collaborate and decide which one of them will complete the student's First Contact Survey.
- Slide 54. The PNP Profile informs the system which accessibility supports the student will need during the assessment. Categories of support include Display Enhancements such as screen magnification and color contrast, Language & Braille, Audio & Environment, and Other Supports such as human read aloud. Test administrators and test coordinators should verify which supports are applicable for the state of Maryland.
- Slide 55. For more information about completing the First Contact Survey and PNP Profile, visit the DLM website, select the **Educator Resource Videos for Year-End Model States**, and view the helplet titled **Completing the First Contact Survey and PNP Profile**.
- Slide 56. The DLM assessment is designed to be delivered over a period of several weeks to an individual student, rather than delivered to an entire classroom. Student Portal delivers the student's first testlet for each rostered subject once the First Contact Survey is complete and the assessment window is open. If a student is missing testlets, check that the student has been properly rostered and has a submitted First Contact Survey.
- Slide 57. The number of required testlets varies by subject and grade. Every testlet begins with an engagement activity intended to spark student interest, activate prior knowledge, and provide a context for the items that follow. All students complete nine testlets for ELA, including one writing testlet. The number of testlets for mathematics depends on the student's grade but ranges from six to eight.
- Slide 58. There are nine or 10 science testlets delivered per student, with three to five multiple-choice items per testlet. Similar to ELA and mathematics testlets, each science testlet begins with an engagement activity.
- Slide 59. Testlet Information Pages, or TIPs, provide test administrators with information specific for each testlet. Information includes if the testlet is computer-delivered or teacher-administered and if any materials are needed for the testlet and how they can be used. Test administrators must download TIPs prior to assessing the student.

- Slide 60. You may wonder why a testlet with only three to five test items takes five to 15 minutes to complete. Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who qualify for the DLM alternate assessment require extensive, repeated, and individualized instruction and ongoing support that is not temporary or transient. These students often have difficulty retaining information in working memory for extended periods of time. Therefore, testlets were created to be brief, containing only a few items. Each testlet begins with an engagement activity designed to activate prior knowledge, motivate the student, and provide a context. For more information about engagement activities, view the helplet [Overview of DLM English Language Arts Testlets](#), beginning at five minutes and 15 seconds. It should be noted that no items are embedded within the engagement activity.
- Slide 61. Maryland’s test administrators are required to upload student writing samples during the 2026 spring assessment window. Educator Portal allows for a secure upload of student writing samples using a direct link that is available to the student’s test administrator. Writing samples can only be uploaded by the test administrator during the assessment window. Once the testing window is closed, the link will no longer be available. After the writing samples are uploaded, state policy determines where and for how long the writing samples are stored.
- Slide 62. The purpose of the annual DLM teacher survey is to collect evidence on the quality of the assessment system and gather feedback on teachers’ and students’ experiences with DLM assessments. The survey data are used to evaluate statements in the DLM validity argument, provide technical evidence needed for federal peer review submissions, and inform programmatic improvements.
- Slide 63. Data are associated with the student’s SSID to support analysis needed for assessment validation. The survey should be completed after the student testing is complete, since some of the questions are specific to the student’s testing experience, but it must be completed during the testing window. Completing the teacher survey is required for at least one student.
- Slide 64. Data cleanup is the responsibility of all users. Test coordinators should verify accuracy of data and make changes as necessary. Data changes can be made any time before or during the assessment window. The DATA MANAGEMENT MANUAL is the best resource for answering questions that may come up during data management processes.
- Slide 65. To complete data management tasks before and during the assessment window, select **Settings**. First, select **Users** to add or edit user accounts; second, select **Students** to manage student data; and finally, select **Rosters**

to create or edit rosters. After making your selection, you can add or edit data manually or use the various upload templates.

Slide 66. Monitoring assessment progress is very important to a successful assessment.

Slide 67. Data extracts are available in Educator Portal and are designed to help monitor the progress of the assessment using information about users, students, and assessment completion status. Many extracts are provided in .CSV format to provide an easy method to edit the data within the file when needed. Refer to the DATA MANAGEMENT MANUAL for complete information on modifying extracts to edit data. Refer to the EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE for information about the purpose of each extract and report.

Slide 68. The DLM alternate assessment provides 15 extracts to help monitor preparedness for the assessment and testing progress during the window.

Several reports are available to help monitor the district and schools.

The Dashboard provides pie charts for the percentage of First Contact Surveys completed and the percentage of blueprint requirements that have been met in the spring assessment window. Also, you can monitor for Testing Outside Hours and Short Duration Testing.

Slide 69. This report will list test sessions that were administered in a short amount of time. The minimum number of seconds for ELA is 60 seconds; for mathematics and science, the minimum is 30 seconds. You are responsible for monitoring the Short Duration Testing tab for test sessions that were completed in the same or shorter than the minimum number of seconds for the subject. If a test administrator has a repeated pattern of short-duration testing, that test administrator must be addressed about their testing practices.

Slide 70. Three examples of useful extracts are the Student Roster and First Contact Survey Status extract, the DLM Test Administration Monitoring extract, and the TIP Access extract.

Use the Student Roster and First Contact Survey Status extract to monitor whether students are rostered correctly and when the First Contact Survey was completed. Use the DLM Test Administration Monitoring extract to monitor testing progress. The number of testlets completed out of the number required in each subject is easily viewed. Use the TIP Access extract to ensure the TIPs are being accessed.

Slide 71. Test coordinators in Maryland have access to the Dashboard, located on the Educator Portal main screen. The First Contact Survey pie chart shows the number of First Contact Surveys completed, in progress, or not started. The Testing Progress pie chart shows the percentage of students who are meeting blueprint requirements.

Testing Outside Hours is a spreadsheet that shows when a student tested outside of Maryland's designated hours of 7:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

Short duration testing is a spreadsheet that displays when a testlet was started, when it ended, and the number of seconds in which it was completed.

The data in the Dashboard is only updated twice daily—noon and midnight. Only the data extracts update in real time when the new file button is accessed. A great deal of discretion must be used when using these reports.

Slide 72. The DLM Service Desk is available to help with the data management tasks covered in this presentation. The Service Desk may be contacted using any of the methods shown here. The Service Desk hours are Monday through Friday, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Central Time. Service Desk hours are extended during the spring assessment window.

Slide 73. When contacting the DLM Service Desk, you are not permitted to electronically transmit student personally identifiable information. This is a federal violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA. Maryland allows only the SSID number to be electronically transmitted using email or Live Chat. If you need to communicate any student information, please call the Service Desk.

Slide 74. This concludes this presentation.