Slide 1. Welcome! This presentation focuses on planning instruction based on the Dynamic Learning Maps® (DLM®) Essential Elements.

Slide 2. Participants are reminded that this is a required training. Participation is confirmed through registration in the PaTTAN Courseware System and completion of the survey via the link provided at the end of the presentation. If you are starting this training and did not register in the PaTTAN Courseware system, please stop and register prior to continuing.

Also, if Act 48 was selected during the registration process, survey completion provides the needed requirements for awarding credit. Act 48 credit will be processed and awarded for all participants at the conclusion of the training window.

Slide 3. Topics in this presentation include a discussion about the relationship between standards and curriculum as well as the relationship between instruction and assessment, an exploration of the learning routes mapped out in the Essential Elements and their linkage levels, and then the bulk of the presentation will focus on some ideas for how to approach instructional planning in light of the Essential Elements and other DLM resources.

Slide 4. First, though, a teacher's approach to instruction often depends on the size of the school or district and the type of classroom setup. Teachers may have self-contained single grade classes, self-contained multiple grade classes, or perhaps even teach in an inclusive setting. Some teachers may have only one student who participates in the alternate assessment, while others may have several students. Some teachers, especially elementary teachers, may be responsible for teaching multiple subjects, whereas other teachers are departmentalized. All of these circumstances are important to consider. One of the main purposes of this presentation is to help explain some of the resources the DLM Consortium offers for teachers, which can be used in a variety of ways. While learning about a new-to-you assessment system can be overwhelming, the information in this presentation is presented stroke by stroke so that hopefully a fuller picture has been painted at the presentation's conclusion.

Slide 5. First is a brief discussion about the relationship between standards and curriculum.

Slide 6. Standards and curriculum go hand-in-hand. Standards provide guidelines about what to teach, but curriculum includes the methods, strategies, and ideas for how to teach the content of the standards.

Slide 7. The alternate standards for the DLM assessment are called Essential Elements. Essential Elements are provided by grade for ELA and mathematics and by grade band for science (elementary, middle, and high school). Essential Elements are aligned to states' grade-level general education standards, but reflect a reduction in depth, breadth, and complexity from the general education standards. Essential Elements are not extended standards. Essential Elements are what Pennsylvania teachers know as Alternate Eligible Content, or AEC.

Slide 8. Here is an example of an ELA Essential Element for grade 5 Reading Informational texts. The Essential Element states, "Identify the main idea of a text when it is not explicitly stated," which reflects a reduction in depth, breadth, and complexity from the grade-level general education standard from which the Essential Element was derived. The grade-level general education standard states, "Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text." In this case, the Essential Element focuses on the concept of "main idea."

Slide 9. Here is a table that connects the grade-level standard from which the DLM Essential Element was derived, the PA Core Standard, and the PA Alternate Eligible Content for comparison.

Slide 10. Here is an example for mathematics. The grade 5 general education standard states, "Fluently multiply multi-digit whole numbers using the standard algorithm." The associated Essential Element is reduced to "Multiply whole numbers up to 5 × 5."

Slide 11. Here is a table that connects the grade-level standard from which the DLM Essential Element was derived, the PA Core Standard, and the PA Alternate Eligible Content for comparison.

Slide 12. Here is an example for science. The high school general education standard states, "Use mathematical representations to support and revise explanations based on evidence about factors affecting biodiversity and populations in ecosystems of different scales." The associated Essential Element is, "Use a graphical representation to explain the dependence of an animal population on other organisms for food and their environment for shelter."

Slide 13. Here is a table that connects the grade-level standard from which the DLM Essential Element was derived, the PA Academic Standard, and the PA Alternate Eligible Content for comparison.

Slide 14. Why are Essential Elements and their connection to grade-level general education standards important? Essential Elements help make the academic content accessible to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities while retaining the academic integrity of the content. The Essential Elements along with the accessibility supports offered through the DLM assessment system are intended to result in better outcomes for students.

Slide 15. To further help the cause of making the academic content accessible to the wide range of students the DLM alternate assessment serves, every Essential Element has linkage levels, which provide a range of skills in terms of complexity and difficulty. ELA and mathematics Essential Elements have five linkage levels. From least to most complex, they are Initial Precursor, Distal Precursor, Proximal Precursor, Target, and Successor. Science Essential Elements have three linkage levels. From least to most complex, they are Initial, Precursor, and Target.

With the exception of writing testlets, which combine Essential Elements and linkage levels, each DLM testlet assesses a single Essential Element at a single linkage level.

Slide 16. Going back to the example ELA general education standard and Essential Element shown a few slides ago, shown here are the linkage levels associated with the Essential Element. The Essential Element itself is "Identify the main idea of a text when it is not explicitly stated." The Target linkage level is most closely aligned to the Essential Element statement. The Target linkage level states, "Can identify the main idea for a paragraph in an informational text that lacks an explicit statement of the topic." Hopefully, when provided with rich instruction and opportunities to learn, a student with significant cognitive disability can achieve the Target skill. However, students may need to learn other skills first in order to get to the Target. The student may not reach the Target level but can still show what they have learned and can do when assessed on one of the lower linkage levels. Here, the Initial Precursor skill is, "Can recognize when he or she encounters familiar people, objects, places, and events." The Distal Precursor skill is, "Can identify illustrations or tactile graphics or objects that reflect aspects of a familiar text, such as setting, characters, or action if it is a story or a person, place, thing, or idea if it is an informational text." The Proximal Precursor skill is, "Can identify the concrete details mentioned in beginner level informational

texts." The Initial Precursor, Distal Precursor, and Proximal Precursor skills link to the Target level skill but give students who are not at the Target level an opportunity to show what they have learned and can do. Some students will be able to surpass the Target linkage level. Therefore, a Successor linkage level is offered. In this case, the Successor level is "Can determine which details contained within a paragraph of an informational text provide an important contribution to the paragraph's main idea."

Slide 17. DLM Essential Elements and linkage levels pertain to standards—the "what to teach." They are not curriculum.

Slide 18. The DLM Consortium does not provide or promote any particular packaged curriculum.

Slide 19. Curriculum decisions are made at the state, district, and/or school levels in terms of which textbooks, programs, and other resources are to be used to shape instruction. However, the DLM Consortium provides several instructional resources that support instructional planning, some of which will be explored later in this presentation.

Slide 20. Next is a brief discussion about the relationship between instruction and assessment.

Slide 21. Like standards and curriculum, instruction and assessment also go hand-in-hand. Without instruction, assessment is unfounded. Without assessment, the effectiveness of the instruction remains unsubstantiated.

Slide 22. Instruction rooted in the Essential Elements is a key to student success with the DLM assessment. Improved student success leads to more and better future opportunities for students.

Slide 23. DLM scoring centers on reporting the number and kind of skills a student has mastered rather than a percentage of correct versus incorrect items or scale score. This approach keeps the focus on what the student has learned and can do.

Slide 24. Another way of thinking about DLM scoring is to remember that the Target linkage level is the goal, although many times students will not reach the Target level, but the assessment still captures the skills they have learned and what they can do.

Slide 25. Having explained what Essential Elements and linkage levels are and the premise they provide for the DLM alternate assessment, the next section will address how to use Essential Elements and linkage levels to guide instruction.

Slide 26. As was covered in Module One, ELA and mathematics Essential Elements are organized into major claims. Claims are statements about what we intend for students to learn and what the DLM assessment will measure. Essential Elements in a claim are then divided into subareas of conceptually-related skills called conceptual areas.

Slide 27. ELA and mathematics each have four claims. However, Essential Elements within claims 3 and 4 for ELA are not currently assessed. Claims are further organized into conceptual areas, which are groups of Essential Elements that are more closely related to one another than to those in the broader claim. For each grade level, Essential Elements from conceptual areas within claims 1 and 2 for ELA are assessed, and Essential Elements from conceptual areas across all four claims for mathematics are assessed. Keep this in mind when planning units of instruction, as conceptual areas may provide opportunities to build instruction targeting multiple Essential Elements instead of approaching each Essential Element in isolation.

Slide 28. Instead of claims and conceptual areas, science Essential Elements are organized into domains, core ideas, and topics.

Slide 29. For all grade bands (elementary, middle, and high) three domains are assessed: physical science, life science, and Earth and space science. Physical science has three core ideas, and each has one or two topics. Life science has four core ideas with one to three topics in each. Earth and space science has three core ideas with one or two topics in each. Like ELA and mathematics, keep these domains, core ideas, and topics in mind when planning units of instruction, as they may provide opportunities to build instruction targeting multiple Essential Elements instead of approaching each Essential Element in isolation.

Slide 30. The Currently Tested Essential Elements are found under the Resources for Educators and District Staff tab of the state's DLM webpage. Select the Educator Resource Page for ELA and mathematics or for the one for science. Shown here is an excerpt from the Educator Resource Page for ELA and mathematics. The ELA icon has been selected, and the Currently Tested Essential Elements for ELA are found under the Essential Elements heading.

Slide 31. Within the Currently Tested Essential Elements document, all currently assessed Essential Elements are listed by grade. Shown here is an excerpt with the Essential Elements for grade 5. Gray flags indicate Essential Elements that are not currently a part of the Year-End model blueprint but may still be useful in instruction. As a reminder, PA is a Year-End Model state, and the summative assessment is delivered at the end of the year.

Notice at the end of the list of Essential Elements is a link to a PDF that contains all of the grade 5 ELA Essential Elements in one PDF.

Click an Essential Element to learn more about it and its linkage levels. For the purpose of this presentation, EE.RI.5.2 "Identify the main idea of a text when it is not explicitly stated" will be used as an example.

Slide 32. EE.RI.5.2 falls within Conceptual Area 1.2.

Slide 33. Essential Elements for conceptual area 1.2 all pertain to constructing understandings of text.

Slide 34. Again, going back to the example for ELA.EE.RI.5.2 shown earlier in the presentation, when the Essential Element is selected in the Currently Tested Essential Elements for ELA, the first page of the resulting PDF lists the general education grade-level standard, the Essential Element, and the linkage levels for the Essential Element.

Slide 35. As a reminder, ELA and mathematics Essential Elements have five linkage levels. Linkage levels are a different leveling system than what was used with the PASA. The linkage levels start with the least complex level, the Initial Precursor. Then in increasing complexity are the Distal Precursor, Proximal Precursor, Target, and Successor linkage levels. The Target linkage level is most like the Essential Element itself. Each testlet a student takes aligns to a particular linkage level, and the variety of linkage levels helps make the assessment academically accessible to the wide range of students who participate in the alternate assessment.

Slide 36. The next page of the PDF provides more information about how the Initial Precursor and Distal Precursor linkage levels relate to the Target. Initial Precursor and Distal Precursor skills are often foundational skills, and so the connection to the Target level may not be obvious. This page helps explain how those skills are indeed related to the Target.

Slide 37. The last page of the Currently Tested Essential Elements PDF for ELA.EE.RI.5.2 is the mini-map. A mini-map is a diagram that shows the possible learning routes from one linkage level to another for a particular Essential Element. The arrows in a mini-map are called connections because they route from one skill to another. The mini-map for ELA.EE.RI.5.2 is rather linear. Other mini-maps, particularly those for mathematics, show multiple pathways of learning from skill to skill. The linkage levels increase in complexity moving down the mini-map. In the case of this mini-map, if a student can identify familiar people, objects, places, and events, as stated for the Initial Precursor skill, perhaps they can then be taught the next skill, which is untested but still important to the route. UN in the box stands for untested. The untested skill here is, "Can name objects in pictures or tactile graphics or name objects used to represent book pictures during a shared reading activity." If after instruction the student can do that, then perhaps the student is ready for instruction aimed at the Distal Precursor skill, which is, "Can identify pictures or tactile graphics or objects that go with a familiar text." Some students will be able to bypass the Distal Precursor skill and move on to the next skill in the map, which is another untested skill but moves the student down the mini-map. The goal, of course, is to get to the Target skill, and with enough time and repeated instruction, many students can achieve higher levels of learning, often surprising their teachers.

Slide 38. Mini-maps provide teachers with a better understanding of how to help a student progress and give students more opportunities to learn. In the past, many teachers struggled with where to start instruction or what to do once a student achieves a certain skill. And, in the past, many teachers fell into the trap of teaching skills that didn't lead anywhere. While the linkage levels that comprise mini-maps are the basis of the DLM testlet writing approach, mini-maps are important instructional guides.

Slide 39. Becoming familiar with Essential Elements and their linkage levels brings up several key questions for teachers to consider as they think about how to approach instruction. First, linkage levels can be used to figure out a student's current level, and how much time they might need to learn the skill, and be ready for the next, higher skill. Teachers must think about the curriculum and the lessons and materials likely to be most effective in the student's instruction. Considering other skills that might be taught in conjunction is also important. Finally, teachers must think about how to provide instruction that fits all the students they are teaching. These are the kinds of questions that the next section will address.

Slide 40. As a review, when approaching instruction targeting the Essential Elements and their linkage levels, the test blueprints for each subject list the assessed Essential Elements for each grade or grade band, and organize them into groups of related Essential Elements by claims and conceptual areas for ELA and mathematics; and domains, core ideas, and topics for science. Then, on the Educator Resource Page for each subject is a link to the Currently Tested Essential Elements for each subject. The Currently Tested Essential Elements list the Essential Elements to be assessed and their linkage levels, showing their interconnectedness in diagrams called mini-maps. Understanding how to use test blueprints and Essential Elements documents is an important first step to approaching standards-based instruction for students who participate in the DLM alternate assessments.

Slide 41. The final set of slides focus on strategies for approaching instruction using Essential Elements and linkage levels.

Slide 42. As stated at the beginning of the presentation, a teacher's approach to instruction often depends on the size of the school or district and the type of classroom setup. Teachers may have self-contained single grade classes, self-contained multiple grade classes, or perhaps even teach in an inclusive setting. Some teachers only have one student who participates in the alternate assessment, while others may have several students. Some teachers, especially elementary teachers, may be responsible for teaching multiple subjects, whereas other teachers are departmentalized. All of these circumstances are important to consider.

Slide 43. Consider the scope of Essential Elements to be taught and assessed. The assessment is comprised of testlets, which are short, mini tests of three to nine items. With the exception of writing testlets, each testlet a student takes assesses a single Essential Element at one linkage level. So, ELA has eight assessed Essential Elements for reading literature, reading informational, and language, plus two to five writing Essential Elements that are combined into a single writing testlet. Mathematics has six to eight testlets depending on the grade, and science has nine testlets regardless of the grade band. Considering the scope of Essential Elements to be taught for the grade or grades of students in the class is an important consideration for instructional planning.

Slide 44. Given the scope of Essential Elements to be taught, is teaching them one at a time an efficient way to approach instruction? Probably not. Building instructional units of multiple lessons targeting sets of Essential Elements may be challenging for special education teachers who are used to working on discrete

skills and tasks. However, approaching instruction from a conceptual angle is recommended to make instruction efficient, effective, and authentic.

Slide 45. One suggestion that may prove helpful is to use the test blueprint to compare Essential Elements by claims and conceptual areas or by domains, core ideas, and topics for science. Also compare the linkage levels for multiple Essential Elements, as many skills could be combined into lessons and units of lessons. And, compare Essential Elements across grades, particularly for multiple grade teaching situations.

Slide 46. For example, shown here is the ELA blueprint for grade 7 with a reminder of the conceptual areas. Essential Elements in conceptual area 1.1 all pertain to determining critical elements of text. Essential Elements in conceptual area 1.2 all pertain to constructing understandings of text. Essential Elements in conceptual area 1.3 all pertain to integrating ideas and information from text. Essential Elements in conceptual areas 2.1 and 2.2 pertain to writing skills. Conceptual area 2.1 is "Use writing to communicate," and 2.2 is "Integrate ideas and information in writing." Being mindful of the conceptual areas helps better understand the groups of Essential Elements listed on the blueprint. The conceptual areas do not change from grade to grade. Only the Essential Elements listed for each conceptual area change from one grade to the next.

For grade 7, the Essential Elements can be combined into units of instruction rather than attempting each one in isolation. Designing instruction targeting multiple Essential Elements is up to the teacher's discretion and professional judgment.

Slide 47. Many times, comparing the linkage levels across the Essential Elements for the grade is helpful because the same or similar linkage level skills may appear for multiple Essential Elements. To that point, while clicking each Essential Element individually within the Currently Tested Essential Elements resource is certainly an option, all of the Essential Elements and their mini-maps can be accessed in a single PDF listed at the end of the grade in the Currently Tested Essential Elements resource.

Slide 48. The linkage levels are not shown in the test blueprints. Only the Essential Elements themselves are named in the blueprints. Shown here is the first page of the mini-maps document for ELA.EE.RL.7.1. The Essential Element is listed along with its linkage level statements.

Slide 49. Continuing in the document, the mini-map is shown, which includes arrows that show the possible pathways of learning a student may follow.

Slide 50. DLM familiar texts are a great place to start when building a unit of instruction for ELA. Familiar texts are found under the Resources for Educators and District Staff tab on a state's page of the DLM website. Select the Educator Resource Page for ELA and Mathematics, then the ELA icon, and then the Familiar Texts heading. Each grade has three main titles, and each main title is broken down into multiple stories for reading literature and informational texts. In the case of the example shown here, the three main titles for grade 7 are based on Rosemary Sutcliff's *Black Ships Before Troy: The Story of the Iliad*, Gary Paulsen's *Hatchet*, and Jacqueline Kelly's *The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate.* For the purpose of this presentation, *Black Ships Before Troy: The Story of the Iliad* was selected, revealing two stories for reading literature and three related informational texts.

Slide 51. At the top of the list of familiar texts for each grade, a link to an "About" document is provided.

Slide 52. Familiar texts are often used in ELA testlets at the Initial Precursor and Distal Precursor linkage levels, the two least complex linkage levels. They are called "familiar texts" because they are intended to be used in classroom instruction so that if a student receives a testlet that uses a familiar text, the text will indeed be familiar to the student. The "About" document takes the familiar texts one step further in that it actually lists Essential Elements and linkage levels for which the familiar texts are used. In the example shown here, again for grade 7, the texts are listed for the Initial Precursor linkage level for ELA.EE.RL.7.1.

The familiar texts are selections from the University of North Carolina's *Tar Heel Reader*.

Slide 53. Different familiar texts related to the same source books are also used for the Distal Precursor linkage level for ELA.EE.RL.7.1.

Slide 54. Familiar texts show up again for other Essential Elements for the grade, such as shown here for ELA.EE.RL.7.5.

Slide 55. For anyone not familiar with *Tar Heel Reader*, the text appears across several screens with navigation buttons at the bottom of each screen, very similar to the way they are displayed in a student's testlet. A sentence or two is presented at a time, and each screen has an accompanying picture. Printing the texts for a student who needs or prefers a hardcopy is perfectly fine.

Slide 56. Familiar texts are usually only used in testlets at the lower linkage levels, but that does not mean they aren't useful for instruction for students who are working toward higher linkage levels. The texts serve as a basis for teaching Essential Element concepts. Many other texts may also be used, as the DLM Consortium does not limit or dictate what texts may be used for instruction based on Essential Elements.

Slide 57. Earlier in this presentation, the point was made that sometimes the same or similar linkage levels skills appear for multiple Essential Elements. This is true not only among Essential Elements for the same grade but across grades as well.

Shown here in these examples for grades 4 and 5, seven of the linkage level skills appear on both mini-maps since both the grade 4 and grade 5 Essential Elements pertain to fractions. For example, notice how "recognize separateness" is an Initial Precursor skill for both Essential Elements, and then "recognize one half on an area model" is a Target level skill for grade 4 but a Proximal Precursor skill for grade 5.

Slide 58. The following example for science can be found on the Educator Resource Page for Science. Select the Essential Elements for Science PDF.

Slide 59. Science Essential Elements often present opportunities to build cross-curricular instruction. Within the Essential Elements for Science document found on the Educator Resource Page for Science, each Essential Element has a table like the one shown here. This example is for a middle school physical science Essential Element. In addition to the domain, core idea, topic, general education standard, linkage levels, and connections to science practices and crosscutting concepts, the table often lists related Essential Elements for ELA and/or mathematics that have been developed for teachers to use in instructional unit planning. In the case of this example, the table lists two related Essential Elements for ELA and one related Essential Element for mathematics.

Slide 60. The collections lists provided for each subject on the Educator Resource Pages of the DLM website are also great references for understanding the kinds of materials that, yes, might be called out for use in administering a particular testlet with a student, but would also be useful in classroom instruction. In fact, using materials in classroom instruction that may also be used on the assessment is a great way to ensure students are already familiar and comfortable with those materials. Materials on the Collections Lists are commonly found in classrooms.

Slide 61. Collecting all items on a collections list is not necessary. A single student, or even group of students, does not typically have testlets that utilize all the materials listed. Remember, the assessment is an online assessment and the Testlet Information Page will provide any materials needed for a particular testlet. Plus, remember that substitutions for materials that are not readily available or appropriate for a student is usually allowed. So, stressing over collecting items is not necessary, but the lists may certainly be helpful when planning instruction and thinking about ways to teach the concepts of the Essential Elements.

Slide 62. DLM partners at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill host the DLM professional development site located at dlmpd.com. Professional development modules are organized by claims and domains, relating back to blueprints for ELA, mathematics, and science. These modules are free and presented in a self-directed format, although materials to use when facilitating a module for a group are also offered.

Slide 63. Back on dynamiclearningmaps.org, an Excel spreadsheet is offered that cross-references professional development modules on dlmpd.com with Essential Elements. The spreadsheet is found on the Educator Resource Page for ELA and mathematics under the Essential Elements heading for either ELA or for mathematics. The same spreadsheet is included for both subjects. The spreadsheet does not include science.

Slide 64. The spreadsheet includes separate tabs for ELA and for mathematics and lists Essential Elements by grade cross-referenced with applicable professional development modules. Notice the link to dlmpd.com directly in the spreadsheet.

Slide 65. So, what's the point of using all of these resources? Aside from the fact that resources like familiar texts are used in actual DLM testlets students may encounter when taking the operational assessment, the resources make the point that the same texts and materials can be used to address multiple Essential Elements. Furthermore, teachers can teach conceptually then use the linkage levels for student practice based on each student's instructional needs. This is true even when students from more than one grade level are in the same class.

Slide 66. A recommended next step after viewing this presentation is to take some time to become familiar with Essential Elements for your student's grade or grades and the subjects you teach. Everything is provided on the DLM website but can certainly be printed if desired. Think conceptually and look for ways to combine Essential Elements to build instructional units comprised of multiple

lessons and opportunities to learn. Use linkage levels to help students practice skills included in your lessons and use mini-maps to determine possible routes a student might take from one skill level to the next.

Slide 67. Remember that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities often require repeated instruction, which is different from skill and drill and rote memorization. Students with significant cognitive disabilities often have limited working memory and therefore benefit from repeated instruction over time to reinforce the concepts taught, continually practice the skills learned, and apply those skills to additional contexts so that the learning is truly theirs to own. This takes time, which is why teaching to the Essential Elements throughout the year is necessary and one reason why the spring assessment window is long.

Slide 68. This table provides the names, roles, agencies, and contact information of the PA PASA DLM team.

Slide 69. This directory provides the names and contact information for the PA PASA DLM Team based upon topic. The DLM Service Desk is also available to assist. The Service Desk's phone number, email address, and hours are provided. Please note the hours are Central Time.

Slide 70. Thank you for your participation in this training. As a reminder, you are required to use the following link, enter the code provided, and answer all questions. Note, this link is unique to this training module. Completion of the survey provides participation verification and the details needed to award Act 48 credit if Act 48 was selected during the registration process.

Please know that Act 48 will be processed and awarded after the training window closes.

Slide 71. Thank you for your attention to this presentation.