DYNAMIC® LEARNING MAPS

ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR MANUAL

2025–2026

YEAR-END MODEL STATES

ELA, MATHEMATICS, AND SCIENCE

Publication Date: 06/30/2025

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

When this manual is updated, the Revision Date will also be updated. An alert will be posted on the Test Updates webpage. A summary of changes is included in the Appendix under Document History.

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
- Installing Kite® Student Portal app - Installing a supported browser to access Educator Portal - General computer support - Internet availability - Display resolution - Issues with sound, headphones, speakers, etc.	- Training requirement - 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)	Only users with an **active** Educator Portal account can make inquiries to the Service Desk about the following issues: - Data issues (rosters, enrollment, etc.) - Unlocking Student Portal

PLEASE REMEMBER, IF YOU CONTACT THE DLM SERVICE DESK:

- **Do not send any Personally Identifiable Information (PII)** for a student via email or via 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)
  - Error messages, including the testlet number if applicable to the problem
  - Service Desk ticket number when following up on a previously submitted issue

For all concerns for which the Service Desk requires student-specific information, you must call.

NOTE: All information in an email is taken into consideration when checking for PII violations. The electronic signature for the sender of an email may identify the district or school in which a student resides. If you need to communicate with the Service Desk via email or Live Chat, ensure the information you are providing meets your state's PII policies.

ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR MANUAL 2025–2026

CONTENTS

AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE

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

- State Assessment Administrator
- Regional Test Coordinators and Regional Users in states that have regions
- DLM Service Desk agents
- District and building educators

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

To learn about updates to assessment coordinator resources such as this manual, subscribe to Test Updates and DLM News on the DLM website.

WHAT'S NEW IN THIS VERSION

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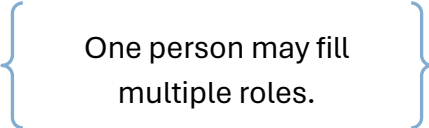
Table 2
What's New

Topic	Starting Page
Science Field Testing for spring 2026	Page 33

INTRODUCTION

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

Four participant roles have been defined by the states using the DLM alternate assessment (Table 3). These titles are used throughout the assessment administration manuals and training resources.

- Test administrator
- Assessment coordinator
- Data manager
- Technology personnel

One person may fill multiple roles.

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

Table 3

Tasks for Participant Roles

Title	Task Summary
Assessment Coordinator	The assessment coordinator is presumed to work at the district level and is the main point of contact between the state department, the DLM Service Desk, and educators in the district. Some states are divided into regions and have regional coordinators with which the district assessment coordinator communicates. The information in this manual also pertains to regional coordinators. The assessment coordinator is responsible for the following: a) Overseeing the assessment process b) Managing educator roles and responsibilities c) Developing and implementing a comprehensive training plan d) Developing a schedule for assessment e) Monitoring and supporting assessment preparations and administration f) Developing a plan to facilitate communication with parents or guardians and staff
Data Manager	The data manager is presumed to work at the district or building level but may be at a higher level. The key duties of the data manager are the following: a) Maintaining educator, student, and roster data. b) Working with the assessment coordinator throughout the year. These roles may be interchangeable in some states.

Title	Task Summary
Technology Personnel	The technology personnel are presumed to work at the district or building level but may have a position at a higher level. The technology personnel do not always have or need access to Educator Portal.
	The technology personnel are responsible for the following:
	a) Preparing the network
	b) Ensuring internet access is available and adequate for assessment
	c) Ensuring educators are using a supported browser on their computers so they can access Educator Portal
	d) Installing Student Portal on students' devices

Title	Task Summary
Test Administrator	The test administrators are educators with the role of Teacher in Educator Portal. Test administrators are responsible for the following: a) Working with Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams b) Selecting, entering, and saving the accessibility supports for each student in the Personal Needs and Preferences (PNP) Profile c) Submitting the First Contact Survey for each student d) Passing Required Test Administrator Training e) Reviewing and verifying student data f) Instructing students on the Essential Elements g) Preparing students for assessments h) Administering the DLM alternate assessment to students

CHECKLISTS FOR ASSESSMENT COORDINATORS

HINT: Print the checklists for your convenience!

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

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

- Table 4. Before Beginning Assessments
- Table 5. Instructionally Embedded Assessments (Optional)
- Table 6. Spring Assessment Window (Required)
- Table 7. Prepare for Next Year

Table 4

Before Beginning Assessments

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

☑	Tasks	Resources
☐	4) Agree to the annual security agreement in Educator Portal. Users will have no access to Educator Portal until they agree to the security agreement each year. 5) Review the Security Agreement extract in Educator Portal to monitor the test administrators' agreement.	See the section Complete Security Agreement in the EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE Educator Portal
☐	6) Register for the DLM Test Updates and DLM News that are emailed during the year.	Test Updates and DLM News on the DLM website
☐	7) Participate in DLM district-level trainings. State administrators may also provide their own training for assessment coordinators.	The DLM website | For States | state page | filter for Assessment Coordinator | District Staff Training Resources
☐	8) Manage district and school staff roles and responsibilities. a) Identify staff to fill the roles of technology personnel and data manager as needed. Designate backup personnel for each role. b) Identify educators who will serve as test administrators for the DLM alternate assessment. c) Make sure each person is aware of their roles and responsibilities and the timeline of events, including firm deadlines for required steps. d) Make sure the technology personnel, data manager, and test administrators understand the DLM assessment policies, procedures, and state-specific policies.	Checklists for data managers, technology personnel, and test administrators from role-specific manuals

☑	Tasks	Resources

☐	9) Develop and implement a comprehensive training plan or implement your state's training plan for district staff and test administrators.
	   a) Review the checklists for data managers, technology personnel, and test administrators.
	   b) Encourage data managers and technology personnel to attend the district training.
	   c) Review the Guide to DLM Required Test Administrator Training and facilitate Required Test Administrator Training (if assigned by the state).
	   d) Monitor educator completion of all parts of Required Test Administrator Training by using the Training Status extract in Educator Portal.
	   e) Identify additional training or resource needs specific to local DLM participants and develop resources to address needs.
	   f) Encourage and monitor participation in the DLM professional development modules for instructional help.
		Checklists for data managers, technology personnel, and test administrators from role-specific manuals
		
		The DLM training for data managers and technology personnel
		
		Guide to Required Test Administrator Training on the DLM website
		
		See the section Develop and Implement a Comprehensive Training Plan in this manual

☑	Tasks	Resources
☐	10) Prepare for assessment implementation. a) Gather technology personnel and data manager contact information and initiate communication among district staff. b) Serve as the point of contact to the DLM Service Desk. c) Determine how you will receive communications from the state or regional coordinators for information that is specific to your district. d) Monitor creation of Educator Portal user accounts and deactivate accounts for educators who are no longer active in your district. Use the remove function, if available in your state, to permanently remove users who have retired, are deceased, or will never need an account in Educator Portal in the future. e) Follow up as needed to ensure deadlines are met for test administrators to activate accounts and complete training. f) Establish an assessment security plan and monitor adherence to the DLM- and state-specific test security policies. g) Troubleshoot issues as they arise.	Test Updates and DLM News on the DLM website Educator Portal EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE See the section Prepare for Assessment Implementation in this manual
☐	11) Monitor and support assessment preparations and administration.	Educator Portal

☐	12) Remind technology personnel, data managers, and test administrators about important deadlines. 13) Ensure every student who is supposed to participate in the DLM alternate assessment is enrolled in the correct grade in Educator Portal and rostered to the correct test administrator for the appropriate subjects for the student's grade. NOTE: If a student was enrolled in the wrong grade, and it was not corrected before the student started testing, the student will have to begin testing again at the new grade level. All previous testlets may no longer be available. 14) Support test administrators and data managers in conducting data verification and revision before the opening of the required spring assessment window for English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, and science. 15) Use the Student Roster and First Contact Survey Status extract to verify each student's First Contact Survey has a completion date and each student is on all the appropriate rosters. 16) Ensure PNP Profile settings are saved and appropriate using the PNP Settings extract. 17) Assist test administrators with technology preparations (e.g., making sure assistive devices are compatible with Student Portal) and prepare the assessment environment (e.g., computer lab scheduling) as needed. 18) Use the practice and released testlets to ensure computers are configured correctly (i.e., the minimum screen resolution required	Educator Portal EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE Participation guidelines on the DLM website Your state page on the DLM website Student Roster and First Contact Survey Status Guide to Practice Activities and Released Testlets on the DLM website
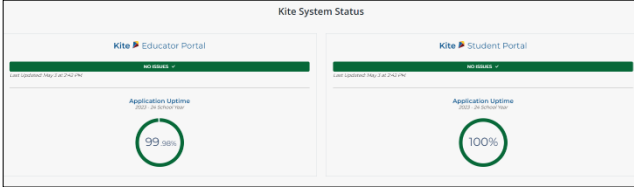
☑	Tasks	Resources
	for Student Portal is 1024 × 768). Other computer requirements are found at the [Kite Suite](#) page on the DLM website. 19) Monitor the Current Kite System Status at the [Kite Suite](#) page. 20) Ensure students' usernames and passwords are printed. Usernames and passwords are secure and should be handled appropriately and securely destroyed after completion of testing. Although a student's username remains the same from year to year, when the student is enrolled each year in Educator Portal, the student receives a new password.	
☐	21) Develop a plan to facilitate communication with parents or guardians and other district and building staff or follow your state-developed communication plan. Schedule meetings as necessary. a) Consider what parents or guardians and district staff will need and want to know about the DLM assessments. b) Deliver communication to various audiences according to the timeline in the communication plan. c) Relay new information from the DLM alternate assessment and the state to other appropriate district and building audiences as needed.	The DLM website | About DLM | DLM Assessments | [Information for Parents](#) See the section Develop a Communication Plan with Parents and Guardians in this manual.

Table 5

Instructionally Embedded Assessment Window (Optional)

☑	Tasks	Resources
☐	1) Monitor and support test administration. 2) Facilitate communication between the DLM staff and other district and building staff during the assessment window(s). 3) View the helplet video [Using the DLM Instruction & Assessment Planner During the Optional Instructionally Embedded Window](#) to learn how to use the Instruction and Assessment Planner for the optional instructionally embedded assessments. Follow the step-by-step guidance in the EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE. 4) Ensure students are enrolled and the student demographic information is correct. 5) Use the Student Roster and First Contact Survey extract to ensure the First Contact Survey is submitted and the students are rostered to appropriate subjects. 6) Ensure suitable Personal Needs and Preferences (PNP) Profile settings were selected for each student by using the PNP Settings extract. Not every student needs a PNP setting. 7) Monitor the Training extract to ensure teachers have passed the Required Test Administrator Training. 8) Monitor assessment activity during the optional instructionally embedded assessment window by using the DLM Test Administration extract, column Q. 9) Remind test administrators that student results during the optional instructionally embedded assessment window are not	TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE [Educator Resource Videos](#) on the DLM website

☑	Tasks	Resources
	factored into the student's end-of-year Individual Student Score Reports. Also, the results are not a predictor of a student's performance during the required spring assessment window. 10) Serve as the first point of contact for test administrators, answering questions about the assessment. Troubleshoot issues as they arise. Serve as the point of contact for the DLM Service Desk. 11) Familiarize teachers with the mini-maps to help with instruction.	

Table 6

Spring Assessment Window (Required)

☑	Tasks	Resources

☐	1) Confirm assessment readiness.
	  a) Verify that student demographic information is correct.
	  b) Monitor suitable PNP settings were selected, if appropriate, for each student by using the PNP Settings extract.
	  c) Use the Student Roster and First Contact Survey Status extract to make sure students are rostered to all appropriate subjects and test administrators, and that the First Contact Survey has been submitted.
	2) Use the First Contact Survey file in Educator Portal to monitor responses for individual students.
	3) Ensure teachers have passed the Required Test Administrator Training.
		TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL
		
		EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE

☑	Tasks	Resources
☐	4) Monitor and support test administration. a) Facilitate communication between the DLM staff and test administrators during the assessment window. b) Ensure testing is completed before the end of the spring assessment window. Use the DLM Test Administration Monitoring extract. c) Serve as the first point of contact for test administrators, answering questions about the assessment. Troubleshoot issues as they arise.	EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE

Table 7

Prepare for Next Year

☑	Tasks	Resources
☐	1) Prepare assessment coordinator plans for next year (develop calendar, design a communication plan, schedule required training, etc.).	
☐	2) Support test administrators in preparing for the next year (evaluate the PNP Profiles, review blueprints for the next grade, etc.). Familiarize teachers with the mini-maps to help with instruction.	TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE Blueprints on the state page on the DLM website
☐	3) DLM assessment window dates have been determined through the 2028–2029 school year. Contact your State Assessment Administrator for your state-specific assessment window dates for the coming year.	

ABOUT THE DYNAMIC LEARNING MAPS ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

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

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

STUDENTS

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

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

Check your state's participation guidelines for eligibility requirements.

THE DLM FOUNDATION FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) AND MATHEMATICS

The DLM learning maps are highly connected representations of how academic skills are acquired, as reflected in research literature. Both ELA and mathematics have a fully developed learning map model.

ELA and mathematics are assessed in each grade for Grades 3–8 and one or more grades in high school, depending on state policy. Nodes in the maps represent discrete knowledge, skills, and understandings in either ELA or mathematics, as well as important foundational skills that provide the groundwork for academic

skills. The maps go beyond traditional learning progressions by including multiple and alternate pathways through which students may develop content knowledge. The ELA map has more than 2,000 nodes. The mathematics map has more than 2,300 nodes. More than 150 foundational nodes are associated with both subject maps. More than 10,000 connections are made between the nodes in the two combined maps.

DLM Essential Elements

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

ELA and Mathematics Essential Elements

ELA and mathematics Essential Elements are linked to each state's grade-level standards for instruction and assessment. Each ELA and mathematics learning map model has small sections with one or more related nodes. Nodes are critical concepts or skills needed to learn the Essential Element for the subject. These small sections are at different levels of complexity and are called linkage levels.

ELA and Mathematics Linkage Levels

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

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

There are two additional linkage levels between the Initial Precursor and the Target linkage levels: Distal Precursor and Proximal Precursor. These linkage levels reflect

nodes along the multiple pathways in the DLM learning map model that identify significant milestones on the way to the Target linkage level. The Successor linkage level extends beyond the Target linkage level.

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

SCIENCE DEVELOPMENT

In 2014, development of a science assessment began in two phases, following the DLM model. Phase I included a 2016 spring operational assessment based on alternate science content standards at three levels of complexity in three grade bands. Phase II, which is in progress, includes the development of a learning map model for science. Additionally, several professional development products supporting science instruction have been developed and more are in progress.

SCIENCE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

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

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

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

SCIENCE LINKAGE LEVELS

Since development of the learning map for science is still in progress, some differences occur between science and ELA and mathematics—for example, instead of five linkage levels, science Essential Elements have only three: the Target, the Precursor, and the Initial. The Target linkage level has the highest level of complexity. The other two linkage levels are lower in depth, breadth, and level of complexity.

The learning outcome description for the Target linkage level is aligned to the DLM Essential Element learning outcome description and is also aligned to the grade-level standard learning outcome description.

Observe the alignment in Figure 1 for Grades 6–8.

Figure 1

Mini-Map for a Science Essential Element

Learning Outcome

DLM Essential Element	Grade-Level Standard
SCI.EE.MS.PS2-2 Investigate and predict the change in motion of objects based on the forces acting on those objects.	**MS-PS2-2** Plan an investigation to provide evidence that the change in an object's motion depends on the sum of the forces on the object and the mass of the object.

Linkage Level Descriptions

Initial	Precursor	Target
Identify ways to change the motion of an object (e.g., faster, slower, stop).	Investigate and identify ways to change the motion of an object (e.g., change an incline's slope or push/pull to make an object go slower, faster, farther).	Investigate and predict the change in motion of objects based on the forces acting on those objects.

The Initial linkage level is the lowest of the three linkage levels. Testlets at this linkage level are typically intended for students who do not yet have symbolic communication. Like ELA and mathematics at the lowest linkage level, these testlets are administered outside of Student Portal by the test administrator, who follows the instructions within the testlet, observes the student's behavior, and then records their observations of the student's responses to the testlet in Student Portal.

The Precursor linkage level is between the Initial and the Target linkage level. Students usually take the Precursor and Target linkage level testlets on the computer, although sometimes, depending on the skills being assessed, they can be teacher-administered.

ASSESSMENT SYSTEM DESIGN AND DELIVERY

BLUEPRINTS

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

The English language arts (ELA) and mathematics blueprints contain Essential Elements from specific ELA claims and conceptual area for each grade. The science

blueprints contain Essential Elements from specific science domains and core ideas by grade band. Science blueprints are in two versions.

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

DLM TESTLETS

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

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

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA), MATHEMATICS, AND SCIENCE

ELA ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY

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

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

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

MATHEMATICS ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY

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

SCIENCE ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY

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

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

CUSTOMIZATION FOR EACH STUDENT

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

FIRST CONTACT SURVEY

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

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

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

NOTE: A student must be rostered, and their First Contact Survey submitted, at least 24 hours before the opening of the spring assessment window for the first testlet to be available on the opening day of the window. Otherwise, the first testlet will be delayed up to 24 hours from the time those tasks were completed.

PERSONAL NEEDS AND PREFERENCES PROFILE

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

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

Some allowable supports are outside of the system and not marked in the PNP Profile. One of those is an enhancement to Kite® Student Portal that allows additional displays (monitors and projectors) to be connected to a computer. This is useful when needing to project the assessment to make it larger for students with significant visual disabilities. To use an additional display, adjust display settings so that the projector is set as the primary display or for display mirroring. Always use the most current version of Kite Student Portal. For help configuring this, contact the district technology staff.

DESIGN AND DELIVERY IN THE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

OPTIONAL INSTRUCTIONALLY EMBEDDED ASSESSMENTS

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

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

Figure 2 is a graphic representation of the process cycle of instruction, assessment, and evaluation for ELA and mathematics in the optional instructionally embedded assessment window.

Figure 2

The Process for Instructionally Embedded Assessments

PROCESS FOR
INSTRUCTIONALLY EMBEDDED ASSESSMENTS
Optional for Year-End Model States

1 CHOOSE
Choose an Essential Element and linkage level for a student using the Instruction and Assessment Planner in Kite® Educator Portal.

More than one Essential Element can be chosen at a time.

Check your state's page of the DLM® website for assessment window dates.

2 TEACH
Provide instruction on the chosen Essential Element.

The linkage level can be changed in the Instruction and Assessment Planner if the student demonstrates different skills during instruction.

3 ASSESS
Return to the Instruction and Assessment Planner to assign a testlet for the chosen Essential Element and linkage level, which will be delivered in Kite Student Portal.

The testlet's Testlet Information Page (TIP) is accessed directly in the Instruction and Assessment Planner.

Learn More with These Videos

DLM Instructionally Embedded Assessments

Using the DLM Instruction and Assessment Planner During the Optional Instructionally Embedded Window

5 REPEAT
Repeat the process throughout the assessment window.

4 EVALUATE
Consider the assessment results provided in the Instruction and Assessment Planner to plan continued instruction on the Essential Element assessed or move on to a different Essential Element.

Student Progress Reports are also available in Educator Portal.

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Required Spring Assessment Window

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

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

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

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

Scheduling and Duration in Minutes for Each Testlet

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

Table 8

Required Spring Assessment Duration by Subject

Subject	Minutes for Each Testlet	Average Overall Duration in Minutes
ELA	10–15	70–90
Mathematics	5–10	35–60
Science	5–10	45–135

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

NUMBER OF ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS TESTED DURING THE SPRING ASSESSMENT WINDOW

Table 9 and Table 10 show the number of operational testlets required during the spring assessment window to test all Essential Elements in the blueprint. The tables are organized by grade for each subject.

Table 9

Number of Expected Testlets by Grade and Subject

Grade	ELA Testlets	Mathematics Testlets	Science Testlets
3	9	8	9
4	9	8	9
5	9	8	9
6	9	7	9
7	9	7	9
8	9	8	9
9	9	7	9*
10	9	8	9*
11	9	6	9*
12	9	0	9*

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

FIELD TEST TESTLETS

Table 10

Number of Field Test Testlets per Student by Subject for Each Grade

ELA Field Test Testlets	Mathematics Field Test Testlets	Science Field Test Testlets
0–1	0–1	4

Zero or one field test testlets in ELA and math may be delivered during the spring assessment window after the blueprint requirements have been met. The linkage level of the field test testlet may be one linkage level above, one below, or the same as the operational testlet that was taken for that Essential Element.

In Spring 2026, the DLM program will administer field test forms for the updated science Essential Elements that will be used for the operational assessment beginning in the 2026–2027 school year. In Spring 2026, students will receive two

field test forms when their first operational testlet is assigned. The field test forms can be completed at any time during the spring window. Subsequent operational testlets will continue to be delivered after the previous testlet is completed, regardless of whether the field test forms have been completed. Each field test form consists of two testlets, and we expect each form to take approximately 7–10 minutes to complete.

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

ANNUAL SPRING TEACHER SURVEY IN STUDENT PORTAL

Each year in the spring assessment window, a teacher survey is available in Kite Student Portal. The survey is an essential part of data collection in support of the assessment's validity argument and the technical evidence submitted to peer review. The first time the student signs into Student Portal, the survey will be available under the **Other** tab, as shown in Figure 3. However, best practice is for the student to complete all the testlets before the teacher responds to the survey questions.

The teacher survey includes three blocks of items. The first and third blocks are fixed sections that all students will receive. The second block is a spiraled set of items that are randomly assigned across all surveys. The assessment coordinator can review the survey questions by requesting them from their state assessment administrator, and the survey questions can also be provided to their test administrators.

Figure 3

Annual Spring Teacher Survey in Student Portal
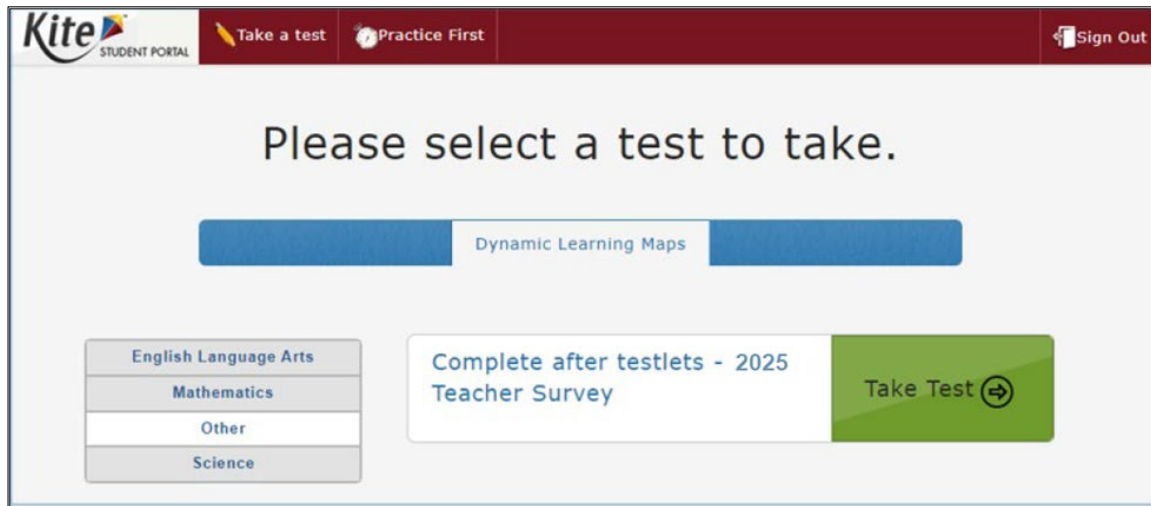
PRACTICE ACTIVITIES AND RELEASED TESTLETS

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

Practice activities are designed to familiarize users with the way testlets look in Kite Student Portal. One activity is for educators and the other is for students.

Released testlets are like operational DLM testlets in content and format. A released testlet is a publicly available, sample DLM assessment.

Information on accessing practice activities and released testlets using demo student accounts is included in the TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL. Additionally, this information is found in the Guide to Practice Activities and Released Testlets.

ABOUT THE KITE® SUITE

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

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

Kite Student Portal is the customized, secure interface where students take their assessments. Once the Student Portal app is launched, other websites or other applications cannot be accessed during the assessment.

Every year, the most current version of the Student Portal app must be installed on the student's testing device. To install Student Portal and view supported platforms, use the links found on the [Kite Suite](#) page on the DLM website. **A browser version of Student Portal cannot be used when assessing students.**

Each student has their own unique username and password. A student's username remains the same from year to year, but for security purposes, each year when the student is enrolled in Educator Portal, the student is assigned a brand-new password. Either the student themselves signs into Student Portal, or their test administrator signs in for them. Educators and staff do not have accounts in Student Portal.

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

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

Educator Portal is the administrative application through which staff and educators manage student data and retrieve reports and extracts. Users can access Educator Portal online using a supported browser, which can be found on the [Kite Suite](#) page of the DLM website. For information on how to work within Educator Portal, see the EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE on the [DLM website](#).

HOW TO USE THE DLM WEBSITE

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

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

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

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

RESOURCES ON THE DLM WEBSITE

Table 11 lists DLM resources and their main purpose. These resources are available on most state webpages.

Table 11

Purpose of DLM Resources

Resource	Purpose
ACCESSIBILITY MANUAL (PDF)	Provides guidance on the selection of accessibility supports available for use when testing in Student Portal This manual is appropriate for any educator who supports students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.
ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR MANUAL (PDF)	Supports the assessment coordinator in preparing district and school staff for assessment
DATA MANAGEMENT MANUAL (PDF)	Supports the data manager in gathering, editing, and uploading data via Educator Portal for users, students, and rosters
EDUCATOR PORTAL USER GUIDE (PDF)	Supports educators in navigating Educator Portal to access assessment information, including student data and reports
Guide to DLM Required Test Administrator Training (PDF)	Guides test administrators through required training modules and post-tests and how to access them from the Training tab in Educator Portal
Guide to Practice Activities & Released Testlets (PDF)	Supports the test administrator in accessing practice activities in Student Portal using demo student accounts
TECHNOLOGY SPECIFICATIONS MANUAL (PDF)	Supports the technology personnel in preparing schools for the technology needs of the DLM alternate assessment

Resource	Purpose
TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL (PDF)	Supports test administrators in preparing themselves and their students for assessments; expands the knowledge base for the assessment coordinator on specific topics; shows how to use Student Portal
Test Updates and DLM News Page	Provides important updates on test administration activities Go to the Test Updates and DLM News page of the DLM website to register to receive alerts when new resources become available.

PREPARE FOR THE DYNAMIC LEARNING MAPS® (DLM®) ASSESSMENT ADMINISTRATION

OVERVIEW

The key duties of the assessment coordinator are the following.

- Ensure students are enrolled in the correct grade and rostered to the correct test administrator.

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

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

DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING PLAN

RESOURCES FOR TEST ADMINISTRATORS

Required Test Administrator Training for test administrators is accessed from the Training tab in Educator Portal. On the DLM website for each state, other supplemental resources are also provided for test administrators. These are in the form of short helplet videos, e.g., Completing the First Contact Survey and PNP Profile. Professional development modules are available to help with instructional support and are in both self-directed and facilitated formats.

RESOURCES FOR DISTRICT STAFF

All training resources for district-level roles listed above are located on the DLM website; none are in Educator Portal.

A prerecorded video, Dynamic Learning Maps® (DLM®) Training for District Roles, is available on each state's DLM webpage and should be viewed each year. This training is interactive and includes a short, closed-captioned introductory video for

each role followed by self-directed components that explain the role further and link to pertinent resources. Also, an optional resource, Check For Understanding, concludes the training for each role. The district training does not have a quiz.

Additionally, many one- to five-minute helplet videos are available on how to do specific tasks in Educator Portal, such as Adding and Editing Students. The helplet videos are closed-captioned.

Table 12 compares these three categories of support.

Table 12

Available Training and Professional Development

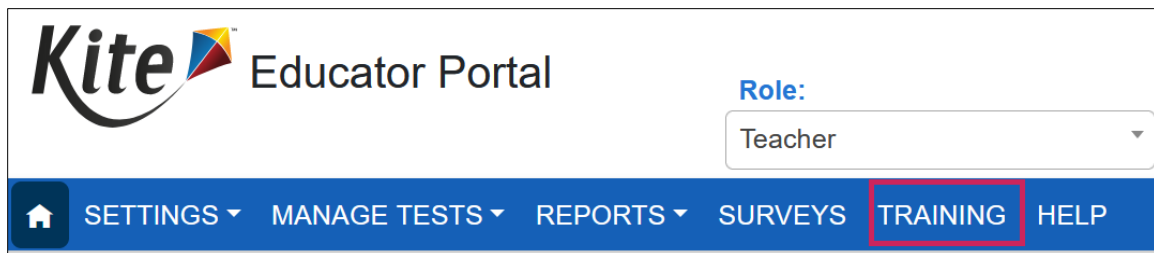| Required Test Administrator Training	Professional Development (PD) for Instruction	Supplemental Training
a) All test administrators must pass the Required Test Administrator Training modules with a score of 80% or higher. b) Critical content for managing and delivering the DLM alternate assessment is covered. c) State administrators decide which format(s) to offer for new test administrator training: self-directed, facilitated, or both. d) All returning test administrator training is self-directed only. e) Test administrators will not be able to deliver testlets until training is successfully completed, and they have selected the link to their certificate.	a) All PD modules are strongly recommended. b) The modules support academic instruction for students who take the DLM alternate assessment. c) Most modules are created for students at the Target linkage level. Teachers who have students who take testlets at the lower linkage levels will need to adjust the module information for them. d) Several modules are available for students at the lowest linkage levels and for those with foundational presymbolic communication. e) State and district administrators may recommend or require specific modules. f) State administrators decide which format(s) to offer—self-directed, facilitated, or both.	a) All supplemental training is strongly recommended. b) Supplemental training addresses a variety of DLM materials and system navigation topics. c) Supplemental training includes short helplet videos—typically one to five minutes long on one topic. A couple of longer presentations are also available. d) Supplemental training modules do not include a quiz.

Required Test Administrator Training

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

After a test administrator signs in to Educator Portal, they access the Required Test Administrator Training course on the home screen by selecting the Training tab as shown in Figure 4. It will then display the Required Test Administrator Training course.

Figure 4

Training Tab in Educator Portal

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

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

During subsequent years, the state administrators decide whether to require returning test administrators to complete the 2.5-hour new training course again or take the shorter 1-hour returning training course. The returning course is in four

sections, and each section corresponds to one of the four modules from the new test administrator training course. Each section has one post-test.

Participants in the returning course have only one opportunity to pass a post-test with a passing score of 80% or higher. If participants do not pass a post-test, they will be directed back to the module from the new training course that corresponds to the section(s) where they incorrectly answered items. Participants may repeat any of the modules and post-tests from the new training course multiple times if needed until a passing score is achieved.

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

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

After the test administrator successfully completes the required training, they will have a new section titled "Congratulations!" In that section will be the course completion certificate, which is named "2025–26 DLM Test Administrator Certificate." Selecting the certificate link will open it in a new tab. If the test administrator does not select their certificate link, their name will not appear on the Training Status extract as having completed training, and they will not be able to test any students.

HINT: Use the Guide to DLM Required Test Administrator Training located on the DLM website for complete directions and information on the required training course.

Professional Development for Instructional Support

Professional development for instruction is strongly encouraged. A variety of content and modules are offered that can be incorporated into a district training plan. An individual educator can take a module as a self-directed course or with a group as a facilitated course.

- Self-directed modules are online and last approximately 30–45 minutes. Each module focuses on a single topic related to the instruction of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Post-tests accompany the modules

followed by certificates of completion that are emailed to the successful participant.

- Facilitated modules for groups cover the same content as self-directed modules. The facilitator is provided with materials to support them in addressing a group of educators. A post-test also accompanies each of these modules, and a certificate of completion is emailed to the successful participants.

Most educators are required to participate in regular, ongoing professional development. Some states give continuing education credits for the DLM professional development modules. After passing the post-test for each module, educators are emailed their certificate of completion and should provide the certificate to the appropriate staff to receive continuing education credits, if available in your state.

Access the modules on the Professional Development website.
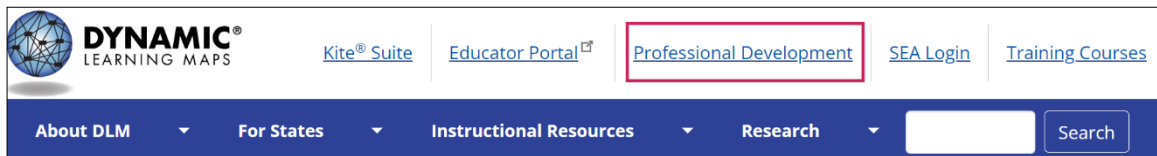
PREPARE FOR ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION

To prepare for assessment implementation, consider these tasks.

☐ Initiate communication among district staff.

☐ Encourage staff to register for Test Updates and DLM News on the DLM website.

☐ Determine how communications will be facilitated between state department staff, other district and building staff, and test administrators.

☐ Ensure educators understand the student Personally Identifiable Information (PII) policy for your state, and that they are not to email or send via Live Chat any student PII or secure testing materials.

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

☐ Ensure students who are transferring into or out of a classroom after the spring assessment window has opened have accurate records and receive testlets at the appropriate school.

NOTE: A student who begins testing in one school and transfers to another can continue testing as soon as the student is enrolled in the new school and rostered. All completed testlets follow the student.

☐ Use Educator Portal extracts and files to monitor assessment administration readiness.

   o Go to the Reports tab in Educator Portal. Select Data Extracts.
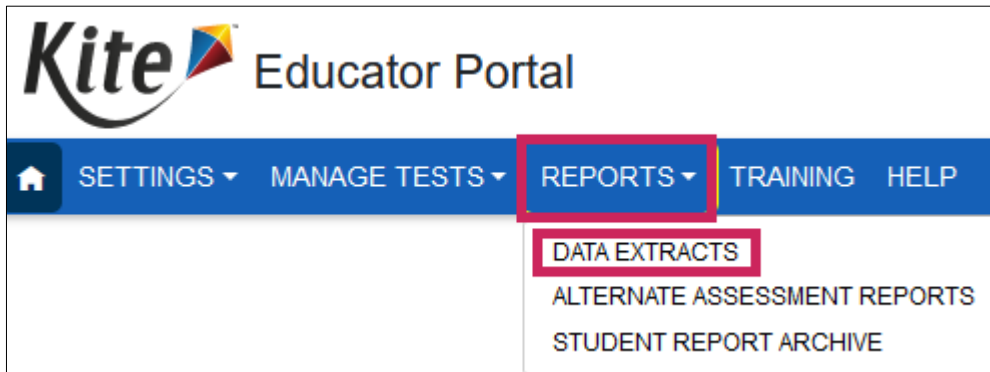
   o Select the Data Management section.
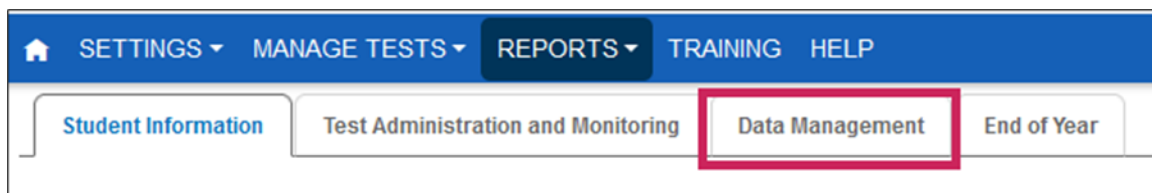
   o Access the User extract to monitor roles and to determine whether an account should be active, pending, or inactive in Educator Portal.

      ▪ Inactivate users who should no longer have an active account for your district.
      ▪ Use the Remove function, if available in your state, to completely delete users who are retired, deceased, or would never need an account in Educator Portal in the future.

   o Access the Security Agreement Completion extract to monitor when the security agreement was accepted.

o Access the Training Status extract to monitor whether training was successfully completed. About 30 minutes after a teacher has completed the required test administrator training and has selected the certificate button, their completion status will be updated on the Training Status extract. To have the most up-to-date data, the New File button **must always** be selected.

Extract	Description	Requested	File	Action
Security Agreement Completion	Security Agreement status by organization			New File
Training Status	List of DLM users by organization and their training completion status			New File
Users	Educator Portal users and their associated role(s).	11/15/2022 09:56 AM	csv	New File

Data Extracts

Note: Data extracts may include **Personally Identifiable Information (PII)**, take appropriate precaution to **protect** saved files.

Student Information   Test Administration and Monitoring   **Data Management**   End of Year

o Select the Student Information section.

🏠 SETTINGS ▾   MANAGE TESTS ▾   REPORTS ▾   TRAINING   HELP

Student Information   Test Administration and Monitoring   Data Management   End of Year

- Access the First Contact Survey extract to review the settings by student.
- Access the PNP Settings extract to monitor whether suitable settings were selected for each student. Not every student needs special settings in the Personal Needs and Preferences (PNP) Profile.
- Access the Student Roster and First Contact Survey Status extract to monitor the date and time when each student's First Contact Survey was submitted and whether the student has been rostered to all appropriate subjects.

☐ Establish an assessment security plan and monitor adherence to the DLM and state-specific test-security policies. Consider these tasks when developing a plan.

o Designate the assessment location(s); a quiet, private environment is best.
o Adhere to state and district policies for assessment security.
o Troubleshoot issues if security issues arise.

Agree to the Security Agreement

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

Figure 5 displays the text of the security agreement.

Figure 5

Security Agreement

The Kite Suite provides opportunities for flexible assessment administration; however, all assessments delivered during the school year are secure.

Test administrators and other educational staff who support implementation are responsible for following the Kite test security standards:

1. Assessments (testlets) are not to be stored or saved on computers or personal storage devices; shared via email or other file sharing systems; or reproduced by any means.

2. Except where explicitly allowed as described in the Test Administration Manual, electronic materials used during assessment administration may not be printed.

3. Those who violate the Kite test security standards may be subject to their state's regulations or state education agency policy governing test security.

4. Educators are encouraged to use resources provided by Kite Suite, including practice activities and released testlets, to prepare themselves and their students for the assessments.

5. Users will not give out, loan or share their password with anyone. Allowing others access to an Educator Portal account may cause unauthorized access to private information. Access to educational records is governed by federal and state law.

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

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

[Save]

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

Responsibilities for Braille Test Administration

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

 DLM uncontracted braille forms are available in

- EBAE
- UEB with Nemeth
- UEB Math/Science

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

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

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

Braille Form Delivery and Testlet Scoring

By selecting a braille form in the PNP Profile, the system will assign a braille form to the student whenever possible. All Braille Ready Files (BRF) are delivered via Educator Portal and must be embossed locally. Therefore, the time needed for the testlet embossing process must be calculated into the assessment preparation time.

For the optional instructionally embedded assessment window, the braille forms for ELA and mathematics and their Testlet Information Pages (TIPs) are in the Instruction and Assessment Planner.

NOTE: Science testlets do not have braille forms in the optional instructionally embedded assessment window during the fall and winter months.

All testlets, including braille testlets, are adaptive in the spring assessment window. When the system assigns a braille testlet, the system also delivers a computer-based equivalent version in Student Portal for the test administrator to use. As the student takes the testlet on the braille paper version, the student indicates each response choice to the test administrator. The test administrator inputs each of the student's responses into the testlet in Student Portal. Responses are scored by the system the same way as with non-braille forms.

After the test administrator submits the testlet in Student Portal, the time needed for the system to assign the next testlet is about 15 minutes. If the next testlet is also

a braille form, the time needed to complete the embossing process must be calculated into the assessment preparation time.

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

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

Table 13 has information about the potential availability of braille forms for each subject, grade, and linkage level and where the forms are delivered for each window.

Table 13

Braille Form Delivery by Subject and Grade

Subject	Grades	Linkage Levels	Windows	Where Braille Form is Delivered
ELA and mathematics	3–5	Target and Successor	The optional instructionally embedded assessment window Spring assessment window	Instruction and Assessment Planner in Educator Portal Test Management in Educator Portal
ELA and mathematics	6–8 and high school	Proximal Precursor, Target, and Successor	The optional instructionally embedded assessment window Spring assessment window	Instruction and Assessment Planner in Educator Portal Test Management in Educator Portal
Science	3–8 and high school	Target	Spring assessment window only	Test Management in Educator Portal

STUDENT REPORTS

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT SCORE REPORTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

DEVELOP A COMMUNICATION PLAN WITH PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

The assessment coordinator should follow the state-developed communication plan, or they should develop a district plan to facilitate communication between parents or guardians and district staff. Schedule meetings as necessary.

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

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

DATA EXTRACTS

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

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

STUDENT INFORMATION

- Current Enrollment
- First Contact Survey File
- PNP Settings Counts
- PNP Settings
- Parents*
- Roster
- Student Roster and First Contact Survey Status
- Student Login Usernames/Passwords

TEST ADMINISTRATION AND MONITORING

- DLM On-Demand Special Circumstance File**
- DLM Test Administration Monitoring
- TIP Access

DATA MANAGEMENT

- Security Agreement Completion
- Training Status
- Users

END OF YEAR

- DLM General Research File**

*In some states, Parent Portal is not available.

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

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

KITE® STUDENT PORTAL AND EDUCATOR PORTAL

KITE ASSESSMENT DEVICES

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

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

Local devices attached to these machines, such as interactive whiteboards, are also acceptable. Interactive whiteboards (brand names include SMART, Promethean, etc.) may be used during assessment and attached to a supported device. The same hardware, software, and screen resolution constraints apply. The projector associated with the interactive whiteboard must project the computer screen at a resolution no lower than 1024 × 768 pixels. For more information on assessment devices, contact the district technology personnel.

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

ENSURE INTERNET CONNECTIVITY

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

SUPPORTED BROWSERS FOR EDUCATOR PORTAL

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

KITE PROCEDURES

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

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

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

GLOSSARY

Table 14 compiles relevant definitions and acronyms for the Dynamic Learning Maps® (DLM®) alternate assessment.

Table 14

DLM Alternate Assessment Glossary

Term	Definition
alternate text	Alternate text is a standardized description of testlet graphics and images (either in the text, the engagement activity, the items, or the science picture-response cards). Alternate text is ONLY needed when administering the testlet to a student who receives the human read aloud support and/or requires verbal descriptions of images in addition to the text. Alternate text is provided on the Testlet Information Pages (TIPs), which must be accessed prior to test administration. After reading the text on the screen, the alternate text descriptions must be read exactly as they appear on the TIP. The only exception when alternate text is not provided in the TIP is when the alternate text provides a cue to the answer (e.g., if a student is asked to identify which shape is a triangle). In that example, the TIP would not include alternate text that named the shapes in the response options. Instead, the alternate text page would instruct, "Do not describe." The test administrator could then use shapes or textile graphics.
card	A cell on the Student View Page in the Instruction and Assessment Planner for each Essential Element and linkage level. Information about the specific Essential Element and the specific linkage level can be accessed when the user selects the card.

Term	Definition
claim	ELA and mathematics: A broad statement about what the DLM program expects students to learn and to be able to demonstrate in English language arts and mathematics. Each claim is subdivided into two or more conceptual areas.
conceptual area	ELA and mathematics: A region within the DLM learning map containing nodes associated with related Essential Elements, representing concepts and skills that support learning the Essential Elements in English language arts and mathematics. Conceptual areas are composed of clusters of connected concepts and skills and serve as models of how students may acquire and organize their content knowledge. Conceptual areas are considered subparts of the overall claims.
connection	ELA and mathematics: The relationship between two nodes (skills) in the DLM maps. Connections are illustrated with arrows in the maps.
core idea	Science: The key organizing principles in science that are taught and learned over multiple grades at increasing levels of depth and sophistication. For science, within each domain, three or four core ideas have been selected to use for instruction and assessment. Each of the core ideas is narrowed further into topics.
display enhancements	Options that change the testlet appearance on the student's device screen, including magnification, overlay color, invert color choice, and contrast color.

Term	Definition
domain	Science: The major science content areas are called domains. The domains that are assessed across all grade bands are physical science, life science, and Earth and space science.
Educator Portal	Educator Portal is a secure administrative application where educators manage student data and retrieve reports and extracts. 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	ELA, mathematics, and science: 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 (ELA) reading testlets, the first reading of the text often serves as the engagement activity. In mathematics and science, the engagement activity provides context for the items. A few science testlets at the upper linkage levels may include a short video without audio as the engagement activity.

Term	Definition
Essential Elements	Essential Elements are the content standards used for the DLM alternate assessments. Essential Elements build a bridge from the grade-level standards to academic expectations for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Essential Elements are at a reduced depth, breadth, and level of complexity. 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.
Field Test Testlets	Field testing is an essential stage in test development. Field-test testlets are administered in the DLM assessments to conduct a preliminary evaluation of item quality for Essential Elements assessed at each grade level for ELA, mathematics, and science. In addition to evaluating item quality, field testing is also conducted to deepen operational pools so that multiple testlets are available in each window, including making more content available at EEs and linkage levels that educators administer to students the most.

Term	Definition
First Contact Survey	A survey completed by the test administrator for each student. The survey is used to collect background information about students who are eligible for 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 survey's core questions together with data gathered from questions in ELA, mathematics, and science are used to **recommend** the linkage level for each Essential Element in each subject. 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 survey's core questions together with data gathered from questions in each subject are used to **assign** the linkage level for the first Essential Element in ELA, mathematics, and science. After the first tested Essential Element, the linkage level assignment of subsequent testlets is adaptive. In the spring assessment window, data gathered from the survey's core questions plus data from the writing questions are used to **assign** the linkage level for the writing testlet.

Term	Definition
Instruction and Assessment Planner	A section in Educator Portal where test administrators perform assessment functions for a student during the optional instructionally embedded assessment window. Test administrators select 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 results of a tested Essential Element at a linkage level. Score results from these testlets are not used for the end-of-year Individual Student Score Reports. Blueprint requirements do not have to be met in this optional window.
instructionally embedded assessment	For ELA, mathematics, and science: An optional assessment that is closely integrated with instruction throughout the optional instructionally embedded assessment window. Mastery results are indicated for each Essential Element at a linkage level that was tested, except the writing Essential Elements, which are not provided until the end-of-year individual student score reports are published. Instruction for the student can be adjusted before another testlet is administered.

Term	Definition
Kite® Student Portal	Kite Student Portal is the customized, secure interface that test administrators use to deliver the assessment to students. All students taking the DLM alternate assessment will have unique accounts in Kite Student Portal. Educators and staff do not have accounts in Student Portal. The most current version of Student Portal must be used and can be found on the [Kite Suite webpage](#) on the DLM website. Once launched, Student Portal prevents students from accessing unauthorized webpages or applications during testing. In addition to operational testing in Student Portal, practice activities and released testlets can be administered using Student Portal. **A browser version of Student Portal cannot be used to deliver operational testlets.**
linkage level	An incremental level of cognitive complexity toward the learning target where an assessment was developed for the Essential Element. Linkage levels for an Essential Element are always related directly to grade-level content standards but at a reduced depth, breadth, and level of complexity. ELA and mathematics each have five linkage levels: Initial Precursor, Distal Precursor, Proximal Precursor, Target, and Successor. These linkage levels are a small section of the DLM learning map containing one or more nodes that represent critical concepts or skills needed to learn the Essential Element. Science has three linkage levels: Initial, Precursor, and Target.

Term	Definition
materials	Any objects, manipulatives, and tools used during an assessment. Materials collection lists are specific to each window for each subject. The lists are found on each state's DLM website under Educator Resources.
node	ELA and mathematics: A representation in the DLM learning map 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 Personal Needs and Preferences (PNP) Profile in addition to information about the student entered in the First Contact Survey in Educator Portal.
Personal Needs and Preferences (PNP) Profile	A section in Educator Portal where the test administrator selects settings to meet a student's personal accessibility needs and preferences for testing in Student Portal.

The PNP Profile includes information about display enhancements, language and braille, and audio and environmental supports. Some settings selected in the PNP Profile are programmed in Student Portal (e.g., magnification). Other selections are provided by the test administrator outside Student Portal (e.g., calculator). |
| plan | A plan is an administrative function in the Instruction and Assessment Planner section of Educator Portal only during the optional instructionally embedded assessment windows. The test administrator creates plans for ELA, mathematics, and science by selecting Essential Elements and linkage levels and assigning testlets. |

Term	Definition
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 Assessment Administrator (SAA)	An Educator Portal role assigned to staff at the state education agency who have the highest level of access and permissions in Kite Educator Portal for an external user in their state. An SAA can transfer students between districts, assign the District Test Coordinator role, inactivate and remove users, and have access to all student reports and extracts.
state education agency (SEA)	A state department of education. The term SEA is sometimes used to refer to people who work at the state education agency.
stem	The beginning part of the item (question) that presents a problem to solve or a question 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
Student Activity Table	The first screen in the Instruction and Assessment Planner in Educator Portal. The Student Activity Table provides an at-a-glance overview for all students rostered to the test administrator in the subjects in which the students are being tested during the optional instructionally embedded assessment window. The data in the Student Activity Table populates based on the test administrator's actions on the Student View Page for each student (e.g., how many testlets were administered). The table also includes three icons providing easy access to the First Contact survey, PNP Profile, and the student's credentials (username and password for Student Portal).
Student View Page	A page in the Instruction and Assessment Planner in Educator Portal that displays details for one student at a time, for one subject at a time, for each ELA, mathematics, and science Essential Elements and linkage levels. During the optional instructionally embedded assessment window, the test administrator uses the Student View Page for several actions for each student (e.g., creating a plan). The system will display information about the student's testing progress, including whether the student achieved mastery of an Essential Element at the linkage level tested.
technology-enhanced items	Computer-delivered test items that require a specialized interaction, such as matching and sorting. A technology-enhanced item is any item that is not answered using direct selection, such as multiple choice. This item type is only used for a few items at upper linkage levels in ELA and mathematics.

Term	Definition
testlet	A short assessment that begins with an engagement activity followed by items. Most testlets have an average of five items. 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.
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 most testlets at the Initial and Distal Precursor linkage levels in ELA and mathematics lists the materials needed or describes the attributes of the materials needed specific to a testlet. The TIP at the Initial linkage level for science may list objects that must be gathered or picture-response cards that must be printed before testing. Best practice is to print them in color. Computer-delivered testlets usually require fewer materials than the teacher-administered testlets.

STATE APPENDICES

DOCUMENT HISTORY

NOTE: Page numbers are valid ONLY for the date and version noted (Table 15). They may change in future versions.

Table 15

Document History of Changes

Date	Section Name/Summary of Changes	Starting Page
06/30/2025	Science Field Testing for spring 2026	Page 33