ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT NOTIFICATION

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT EXPLANATION AND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND IEP TEAMS

Academic Achievement Based on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards

The Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) alternate assessment is designed for those students identified with a most significant cognitive disability who require instruction based on alternate academic achievement standards.

The Essential Elements are descriptions of what students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are expected to know and be able to do at each grade level from Kindergarten through 12th grade. They are essential skills that are linked to the Kansas Curricular Standards grade-level specific expectations.

Differences Between Assessments Based on Grade-level Academic Achievement Standards and Those Based on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards

All students with a disability and an IEP have a right to a free appropriate public education. This right includes the opportunity for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to be involved in and make appropriate progress in the same general education curriculum as other students. Sometimes, students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are not able to access the standards in a meaningful way or to the same degree as other students. Kansas educators worked with educators from 12 other states to create alternate academic achievement standards that align with the Kansas Curricular Standards. These standards are at a reduced depth, breadth, and complexity. These alternate academic achievement standards are called the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Essential Elements (EE) in English language arts (ELA), mathematics and science.

The Kansas Assessment Program (general state assessment) provides parents, educators, and policymakers with one piece of information about student learning. The DLM is used to test academic achievement for students with a most significant cognitive disability. It is a completely individualized test designed so students can show what they know and can do. The assessment is given in short parts called testlets so your child does not become too tired or stressed. The DLM ELA and mathematics assessment is based on an instructionally embedded model with a fall and spring test window.

Impact of State and Local Policies on a Student Taking an Alternate Assessment Aligned with Alternate Academic Achievement Standards

Testing students on the alternate assessment and working from the alternate academic achievement standards can place a student on a different trajectory. These students are measured using performance standards at a reduced depth, breadth, and complexity which can result in fewer post-secondary opportunities. Teachers of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities use the EE to plan what is taught and how it is taught so that their students can learn as much as possible. The EE may also be used to help teachers develop ways to measure student progress. The EE provide teachers,

parents and students information about how students learn and grow in the academic areas of ELA, mathematics and science. They answer the question "What should my child be learning?" Here are a few examples:

EE English Language Arts – Reading Literature -Grade 3:

Determine the beginning, middle and end of a story.

Students use pictures to identify an event that occurred in the beginning, middle or end of the story

EE English Language Arts – Writing-Grade 7:

Can introduce an informational topic while writing and extend by writing about ideas and information related to the topic.

Teachers can ask students to select a topic for writing and then ask them basic questions about the topic.

EE Mathematics-Geometry- High School:

Express numerical answers with a degree of precision appropriate for the problem context.

Students work with money values (e.g., $2.42) and learn how to round up to the nearest dollar ($2.42 rounds to $3.00).

EE Science -Middle School

Use models of food chains to identify producers and consumers.

Students identify what animals eat (plants or meat), then create a food chain using picture cards and arrows.

If a student will participate in the DLM alternate assessment, IEP teams need to consider the EEs when developing the student's IEP. The EEs help the teacher identify the student's needs and plan grade level instruction and assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Information regarding the student's performance is included on the IEP under Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance. More information and copies of the EEs are available online at: https://www.ksde.gov/student-success/assessments/dynamic-learning-maps-and-essential-elements/dlm-essential-elements.

Participation in the Alternate Assessment May Affect Completion of a Regular High School Diploma

Kansas does not issue an alternate diploma for students who graduate based on IEP goals aligned to alternate academic achievement standards. Students working from the EEs will not be exposed to curriculum at the same depth, breadth, and complexity as their grade-level peers. For these reasons, participation in the alternate assessment may delay or otherwise affect the student's completion of the requirements for a regular high school diploma; however, no student who takes an alternate assessment is prevented from attempting to complete the requirements for a regular high school diploma.

For more information, contact:

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