KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

GUIDELINES

Dynamic Learning Maps

PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES FOR KANSAS

The criteria for participation in Kansas' Alternate Assessment/Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) reflect the pervasive nature of a student with a **most significant cognitive disability in the state**. Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams must select the alternate assessment as the only option for **ALL** subject content areas assessed.

The following aren't allowable (or acceptable) considerations for determining participation in the DLM Alternate Assessment.

1. A specific disability category or label.
2. Poor attendance or extended absences.
3. Native language/social/cultural or economic difference.
4. Expected poor performance on the general education assessment.
5. Academic and other services student receives.
6. Educational environment or instructional setting.
7. Percent of time receiving special education.
8. English Language Learner (ELL) status.
9. Low reading level/achievement level.
10. Student's anticipated disruptive behavior.
11. Impact of student scores on accountability system.
12. Administrator decision.
13. Anticipated emotional duress.
14. Need for accommodations (e.g., text to speech, assistive technology/AAC) to participate in assessment process.

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Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

June 2026

Name of Student:_____ Date: _____

The student is eligible to participate in the DLM if ALL responses below are marked YES.

CRITERIA	YES	NO	SUPPORTING EVIDENCE
1. Cognitive assessment data supports a **most significant cognitive disability** (intellectual disability). PARTICIPATION CRITERION DESCRIPTORS: Review of student records indicate a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact intellectual functioning. **Typically functioning 2 ½ or more Standard Deviations (SD) below the mean.**	☐	☐	
2. Adaptive assessment data supports a **most significant deficit** in adaptive behavior. PARTICIPATION CRITERION DESCRIPTORS: Review of student records indicate a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact adaptive behavior (those skills and behaviors essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life). **Typically functioning 2 ½ or more SD below the mean.**	☐	☐	
3. The student is primarily being instructed (or taught) using the DLM Essential Elements as content standards. PARTICIPATION CRITERION DESCRIPTORS: Present levels and measurable goals listed in the IEP for this student are linked to the enrolled grade level DLM Essential Elements and address knowledge and skills that are appropriate and challenging for this student. All goals must have at least 2 benchmarks/objectives.	☐	☐	
4. The student requires extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in **ALL** grade-and age-appropriate curriculum at a reduced depth, breath and complexity. PARTICIPATION CRITERION DESCRIPTORS: The student: **a.** Requires extensive, repeated, individualized instruction and support that is neither temporary nor limited to specific content areas. **AND**	☐	☐	
b. Uses substantially adapted materials and individualized methods of accessing information in alternative ways to acquire, maintain, generalize, demonstrate and transfer skills across multiple settings.	☐	☐	

CRITERIA	YES	NO	SUPPORTING EVIDENCE
5. Parent/legal education decision-maker notification includes discussion of <u>ALL</u> of the following areas. • The differences between the alternate achievement standards and academic content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled, including any effects of State and local policies on the student's education resulting from taking an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards; **AND**	☐	☐	
• That the student's achievement will be measured based on alternate achievement standards; **AND**	☐	☐	
• How the student's participation in alternate standards and assessment(s) may delay or otherwise affect the student from completing the requirements for a regular high school diploma; **AND**	☐	☐	
• That the student will not be prevented from attempting to complete the requirements for a regular high school diploma. **AND**	☐	☐	
• The LEA provided the parent(s)/legal education decision-maker with **<u>ALL</u>** of the above information in an understandable and uniform format and in a written language or oral translation that the parent(s)/legal education decision-maker can understand.	☐	☐	

Please sign and date that all criteria have been discussed.

Parent/legal education decision-maker: _____ Date: _____

Parent/legal education decision-maker: _____ Date: _____

What is a most significant cognitive disability?

The term "**most significant cognitive disability**" isn't a separate category of disability. It is a designation given to a small number of students with disabilities **for purposes of participation in the statewide student assessment program.** This subgroup of students referred to in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as having the "most significant cognitive disabilities" constitutes **less than 1%** of the student population. The students are:

1. Within one or more of the existing categories of disability under IDEA (e.g.., Intellectual disability, autism, multiple disabilities), and

2. Whose cognitive impairments and adaptive behaviors may prevent them from attaining grade-level achievement standards even with extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports.

Learner Characteristics

- A most significant cognitive disability with **co-existing deficits in both communication and adaptive behavior**. Typically functioning 2 1/2 or more SD below the mean.
- A most significant cognitive disability impacts learning, memory, judgement and processing which impactslearning acquisition.
- Perform substantially below grade level expectations on the academic content standards for the age-appropriate grade they are enrolled, even with the use of accommodations and modifications.
- Require extensive, specially designed individualized instruction, and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade-and age-appropriate curriculum (at a reduced depth, breadth and complexity).
- Requires more time for:
  - **a.** Processing
  - **b.** Opportunities to generalize language.
  - **c.** Time to learn and process language.
  - **d.** Alternate ways to communicate including augmentative.
  - **e.** Alternative communication to supplement or replace speech or writing.

Educational Considerations

- IEP teams are responsible for making the determination of a **most significant cognitive disability** for the purpose of participation in statewide student assessments.
- Requires the IEP team to complete the DLM Participation Guidelines for Kansas form.
- Requires a "yes" answer to **ALL** participation criterion on the DLM Participation Guidelines for Kansas.
- DLM is used as the assessment tool in **ALL** content areas during the statewide student assessments.
- The IEP goals and benchmarks/objectives are aligned to the enrolled grade-level DLM Essential Elements. All goals must have at least 2 benchmarks/objectives.
- The IEP addresses knowledge and skills that are appropriate and challenging for the student.
- Instruction using the Essential Elements reduces exposure to the full depth, breadth, and complexity of the **GENERAL** curriculum.
- Students performing "at target" or "advanced" on both English language arts and mathematics on the DLM year-end report may need transitioned to the general assessment with appropriate accommodations in order to be appropriately challenged.
- Students instructed on general education content standards aren't eligible for the DLM assessment.
- Parents/legal education decision maker are notified of the potential implications for participating in the alternate assessment.

Helpful Websites

Kansas State Department of Education DLM Page

Dynamic Learning Maps

For more information, contact:

Cary Rogers
Education Program Consultant
Special Education
(785) 296-0916
cary.rogers@ksde.gov

Kansas State Department of Education
900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 102
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212

www.ksde.gov

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