

# GUIDELINES



## Dynamic Learning Maps PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES FOR KANSAS

The criteria for participation in Kansas' Alternate Assessments/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 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. Anticipated student's disruptive behavior.
11. Impact of student scores on accountability system.
12. Administrator decision.
13. Anticipated emotional duress.
14. Need for accommodations (e.g., assistive technology/AAC) to participate in assessment process.

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

1. The student has a **most significant cognitive disability\*** (intellectual disability).

- Yes     **PARTICIPATION CRITERION DESCRIPTORS:** Review of student records indicate a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact intellectual functioning. **Typically functioning 2 ½ - 3 Standard Deviations (SD) below the mean.\***
- No

2. The student has significant deficits in adaptive behavior.

- Yes     **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 - 3 SD below the mean.\***
- No

3. The student is primarily being instructed (or taught) using the DLM Essential Elements as content standards.

- Yes     **PARTICIPATION CRITERION DESCRIPTORS:** Goals and instruction 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.
- No

4. The student requires extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in all grade-and age-appropriate curriculum.

- Yes     **PARTICIPATION CRITERION DESCRIPTORS**  
The student:
- No
- a. Requires extensive, repeated, individualized instruction and support that is neither temporary nor limited to specific content areas.
  - 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.

\* See page 2.



# Dynamic Learning Maps

## PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES FOR KANSAS

### 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, traumatic brain injury), and
2. Whose cognitive impairments affect adaptive function and may prevent them from attaining grade-level achievement standards, even with systematic instruction.

### Learner Characteristics

- Severe cognitive disability and significant deficits in communication/language and **significant deficits in adaptive behavior**. Typically functioning 2 ½ — 3 SD below the mean.
- Significant cognitive disability impacts learning, memory, judgment and processing which impacts learning 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.
- Require extensive specially designed and individualized instruction or substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade-and age-appropriate curriculum.
- Population requires more time for processing; opportunities to generalize language; time to learn and process language; and alternate ways to communicate including augmentative and 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 four participation criterion on the DLM Participation Guidelines for Kansas.
- DLM used as the assessment tool in all content areas during the statewide student assessments.
- DLM Essential Elements are the enrolled grade level content standards linked to the IEP goals and instruction.
- Address knowledge and skills that are appropriate and challenging for the student.
- Reduced exposure to the full depth and breadth of the 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.

### Helpful Websites

Definition of Significant Cognitive Disability  
<http://naac.cast.org/glossary?word=Significant+cognitive+disabilities>

Kansas State Department of Education DLM Page  
<https://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=887>

Dynamic Learning Maps  
<https://dynamiclearningmaps.org/kansas>

For more information, contact:

Cary Rogers  
Education Program Consultant  
Special Education and Title Services  
(785) 296-0916  
[crogers@ksde.org](mailto:crogers@ksde.org)



Kansas State Department of Education  
900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 102  
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212  
[www.ksde.org](http://www.ksde.org)