

Dear Parent or Guardian,

In spring 2023, your child's teacher used the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Alternate Science Assessment to test academic progress in science. The DLM assessment measures the scientific knowledge and skills that matter most for students – skills like scientific thinking, problem-solving and sense-making that lead to confidence and success in science.

This assessment is designed for students with many types of significant cognitive disabilities. It is an individualized test designed so students can show what they know and what they can do. The assessment is given in short parts, called testlets, so your child can be engaged throughout the assessment and can take breaks as needed.

You are receiving a score report from your child's school for the DLM Assessment that your child completed. This guide walks you through important takeaways you can learn from your child's score report and provides you with resources to help your child improve in the coming year. If you have not received your child's score reports, please contact the school that your child attended in the 2022-23 school year and ask for a copy.

Your child's DLM Assessment score report breaks down performance to reflect areas in which they are doing well or need more support. Your child's teachers can use this information to provide additional support or more challenging work when needed. You may also use this information to focus learning time at home.

We know that assessment scores do not tell your child's entire academic story. The results are one of several measures – including report card grades, classroom performance and teacher feedback – that together create the full picture of your child's progress in school. Within that picture, annual assessments are designed to help you and your child's teachers better understand the progress your child has made on the state content standards for English language arts (ELA) and math during the past year. Assessments also help us to better understand what resources schools need to support the needs of all learners.

Ultimately, our goal is to ensure that students are prepared to be successful in school and pursue their dreams and aspirations. If you have general questions or want more information about the assessments, please visit our website at <a href="mailto:osse.dc.gov/service/alternate-assessments">osse.dc.gov/service/alternate-assessments</a> or have a discussion with your child's teacher. You can also use the resources on page 4 of this guide to gain a better understanding of the assessment, the Next Generation Science Standards, and learning resources that can be used at home.

At the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), we know that all students can learn and achieve at high levels and appreciate the opportunity to partner with you to help your child succeed.

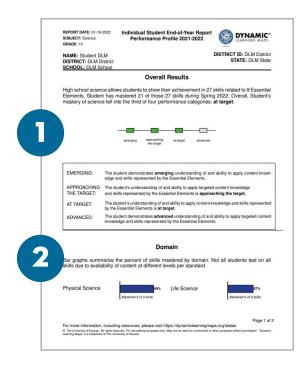
Thank you,

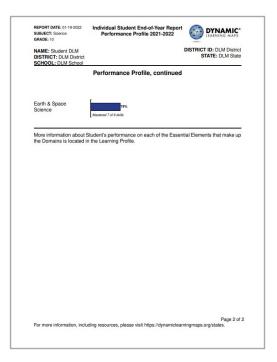
Dr. Christina Grant

DC State Superintendent of Education

# BREAKING DOWN THE SCORE REPORT: PERFORMANCE PROFILE

This guide will walk you through the most important takeaways you can learn from your child's score report. It also provides you with helpful resources to help your child improve their performance in the coming year.





# 1) Description of Overall Results

The Performance Profile provides a report of your child's overall performance in a subject. The total number of skills that must be mastered to reach a certain performance level was determined by experts in content and experts in teaching students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

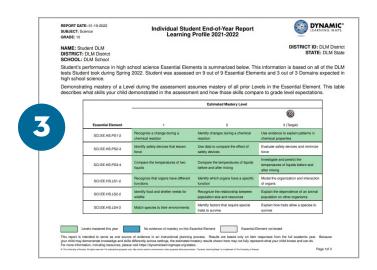
# 2) Results Measurement

The bar graphs on the Performance Profile demonstrate your child's mastery of skills related to the Essential Elements for each domain (physical science, life science or earth science.

#### Reminders

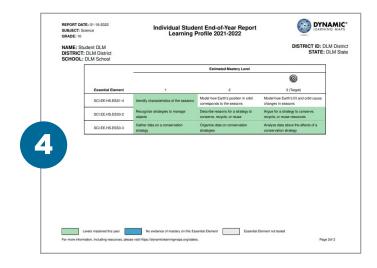
- Skill mastery is based on what your child demonstrated on the DLM assessments. Your child may have demonstrated a similar skill during instruction but not demonstrated the skill during a DLM assessment.
- The assessment measures where your child is with regard to the grade-level target. Not all students will perform at the At Target level, and that is to be expected.
- The number of skills mastered does not mean that your child answered a certain percent of items correctly.

# BREAKING DOWN THE SCORE REPORT: LEARNING PROFILE



## 3) Essential Mastery Level

The Learning Profile shows one row for each Essential Element in science. For every Essential Element, there are skills at three linkage levels: Initial, Precursor and Target. These levels are shown in columns on the Learning Profile. The Target level represents the grade-level expectation for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.



# 4) Reporting Guide

On the Learning Profile, skills are shaded to show if a student mastered the skill, did not demonstrate mastery, or was not tested on the skill.

#### Reminders

- The amount of white space on the Learning Profile does not necessarily reflect a lack of instruction. The DLM assessment is designed so your child may be instructed at a linkage level that is an appropriate level of challenge for them.
- Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities have a variety of educational goals.
   Academics are one part of their educational program. Teachers provide instruction beyond
   what is reflected in your child's Learning Profile, including other academics, functional
   skills, and other priorities identified in the Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- Reports include only valid student records as determined by state-level review of results.
  If your child's record was invalidated during the state's two-week review window, they will not have an Individual Student Score Report.

## RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Below are several helpful resources to help you child grow their performance, as well as useful tips for discussing the score report with your child and with your child's teacher.

## Want to learn more about Science Scores or the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Science Assessment?

Visit the following websites for more information on the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Science Assessment and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS):

- OSSE.DC.gov/science for information on the score reports, DC Science Assessments.
- Nextgenscience.org to learn more about the NGSS.
- <u>Dynamiclearningmaps.org/essential-elements/science</u> for information about the DLM Essential Elements, the alternate science standards in which the DLM Science Assessment is based.

### Now that you have your child's test results, what's next?

There are several resources available that will help you use these assessments to support your child academically. These resources are intended to be helpful tools for the sole purpose of assisting students and families. OSSE and the District do not endorse and/or sponsor any such resources to the extent that they are meant to be informative recommendations:

- DLM Guide to Practice Activities and Released Testlets provides instructions on how to access practice tests for students in grades 5 and 8, and students taking high school biology.
- NSTA.org/science-resources-parents provides resources for parents to support NGSS learning at home.
- Exploratorium.edu/snacks/ introduces scientific investigations of natural phenomena students can explore using common, inexpensive, readily available materials.
- HowToSmile.org is a project of University of California, Berkeley's Lawrence Hall of Science and the National Science Foundation that provides families with easy-to-follow scientific investigations.

### Interested in talking to your child about their score?

Families are the experts on talking to their children. Below are a few helpful things to remember when talking about your child's test score:

- Test scores are only one measure of performance.
- Focus on strengths.
- Discuss strategies for addressing areas of growth (e.g., online practice, working with a teacher).

## Interested in talking to your child's teacher about their score?

Below are a few questions that can help guide a conversation with your child's teacher:

- What are my child's learning goals in science this year?
- How is my child performing in science class?
- What extra support in school and at home does my child need to meet these goals?
- Based on your observations, what does my child do well? What are some areas of growth for my child?













