

MEMORANDUM

To: Special Ed. Directors, Test Coordinators, Curriculum Coordinators, Principals, Teachers

From: Phyllis Lynch, Chief, Teaching and Learning

Date: Friday, September 18, 2026

Re: RI Moving from the DLM Year End Model to Instructionally Embedded Model

For more than eight years, Rhode Island has administered the Year End model of DLM. DLM will continue to be Rhode Island's alternate assessment — what is changing is when and how it is given. We are shifting from the Year End model to the Instructionally Embedded (IE) model, beginning in 2027-28, so that assessment happens throughout the year, embedded in instruction, rather than as a single spring event.

Why is RI moving to the Instructionally Embedded DLM Assessment?

The IE model strengthens the connection between assessment and instruction: testlets are given soon after instruction, so results can immediately inform lesson planning. Fall results provide baseline data that help teachers identify strengths and gaps before the spring window. This change will occur in two phases:

- **Phase 1 (2026-27 school year): The Instructional Planner is available for educators to use and practice** with from October – February 2, 2027. RIDE is offering three options for training dates. **Participation and training are not required** but will help prepare for next year. See calendar below for dates and times.
- **Phase 2 (2027-28 school year): The IE model officially replaces the year end model.** Scores will count in state assessment and accountability reporting, across two required testing windows. *Test window dates will be posted on the RI DLM web page at www.ride.ri.gov/dlm*

Questions: Please see www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-manuals for information about this year's DLM administration and www.ride.ri.gov/DLM for information about the IE model. Contact us at alternate.assessment@ride.ri.gov with any additional questions.

Below is an overview of the DLM instructionally embedded assessment model, along with a planning calendar and key tasks to help educators prepare.

About the Instructionally Embedded Model

The DLM alternate assessment is designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities delivered through short testlets. For ELA and mathematics, this assessment is “instructionally embedded” — meaning woven directly into ongoing instruction across both fall and spring windows, rather than delivered as a single end-of-year test.

For each tested Essential Element, the test administrator selects a linkage level, provides instruction at that level, and assigns a testlet when the student is ready. Results (Mastered/Not Mastered) are available immediately, allowing instruction to be adjusted before the next testlet is assigned. This cycle repeats until blueprint requirements are met.

Science testlets are administered only in the spring window and results are not available until end-of-year Individual Student Score Reports are published.

Phase 1 DLM Alternate Assessment Calendar (2026–27 School Year)

This calendar covers Phase 1 (2026–27 school year) events only; Phase 2 (2027–28) testing window dates will be announced separately. Events stay in date order, with a color-coded tag on each row identifying whether it's an Instructional Planner, DLM, or Both task. Legend below.

Applies to Both (DLM & Instructional Planner)	Instructional Planner (Practice Year)	DLM State Assessment (Required)
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Category	Date	Event & Task
BOTH	Sept. 23, 2026 (10:00 – NOON)	Alternate Assessment Special Education Director Webinar Registration: Alternate Assessment Webinar
BOTH	Sept. 2026 – May, 2027	Test Administrator Training Course available All teachers who will be administering the DLM alternate assessment and/or using the Instructional Planner must complete the test administrator training before they can administer the DLM or use the Instructional Planner. <i>See your district test coordinator or district special education director if you need an account in Kite Educator Portal.</i>
BOTH	Oct. 5, 2026	Overnight student registration to Kite Educator Portal begins Review all student information in the IEP Census to ensure that students are properly coded with 3 = Alternate Assessment, or they will not be registered.
BOTH	Oct. 21, 2026 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM	Alternate Assessment Special Education Director Webinar Registration: Alternate Assessment Webinar
INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNER	No later than Oct. 24, 2026	Complete prerequisite tasks for Instructional Planner training for Test Coordinators* ☐ Activate your Educator Portal account and agree to the annual Security Agreement. ☐ Identify who will be using the Instructional Planner; verify they have an account in Kite Educator Portal. ☐ Ensure every student is enrolled in the correct grade and roster them to the correct test administrator. ☐ Verify the First Contact Survey and Personal Needs Profile are submitted for at least two students for each teacher attending the Instructional Planner training ☐ Confirm technology readiness: Student Portal installed/updated, supported browser for Educator Portal, internet connectivity, screen resolution (1024x768 minimum).
INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNER	No later than Oct. 24, 2026	Complete prerequisite tasks for Instructional Planner training* ☐ Activate your Educator Portal account and agree to the annual Security Agreement.

Category	Date	Event & Task
		☐ Complete Required Test Administrator Training (new: ~2.5 hrs; returning: ~1 hr), scoring 80% or higher. ☐ Ensure students have the correct grade and rostered to each content area correctly. ☐ Verify the First Contact Survey and Personal Needs Profile are submitted for at least two students on your rosters.*
INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNER	Oct. 27, 28, 29 8:00AM – NOON Register Here	DLM Instructional Planner Teacher Training* For classroom teachers who give the DLM alternate assessment for one training session (each session is the same).
INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNER	Oct. 2026 – Feb. 2, 2027	DLM Instructional Planner available for teachers to use*
INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNER	Nov. 2026 TBD	DLM Instructional Planner Office Hours
INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNER	Dec. 2026 TBD	DLM Instructional Planner Office Hours
INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNER	Feb. 2, 2027	Last day to use the DLM Instructional Planner
DLM State Assessment	Mar. 8, 2027	DLM Test Coordinator Training This training is required for anyone serving as the district test coordinator for DLM.
DLM State Assessment	No later than Mar. 15, 2027	Complete prerequisite tasks for DLM Alternate Assessment Testing Window using the Test Coordinator Checklist and the Test Administrator Checklists (www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-manuals).
DLM State Assessment	Mar. 29 – May 28, 2027	DLM Alternate Assessment Testing Window Any student eligible for the alternate assessment in grades 3-8 and 11 must complete the DLM alternate assessments in ELA, Math, and Science, as required by their grade level.
DLM State Assessment	July 23, 2027	DLM Student Score Reports available in Kite Educator Portal for ELA and Math
DLM State Assessment	Aug. 6, 2027	DLM Student Score Reports available in Kite Educator Portal for Science

*If an LEA sends teachers to an Instructional Planner training session, the tasks shown above **must be completed no later than October 24, 2026** or teachers will not be able to use the IE Planner during training. Before a linkage level can be assigned, the First Contact Survey and PNP **must** be completed (*assignment takes at least 24 hours*).