

State Seal of Biliteracy

Section A - Introduction

The State Seal of Biliteracy was established by the Illinois Legislature to recognize public high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English.

The purposes of the State Seal of Biliteracy are as follows:

1. To encourage pupils to study languages.
2. To certify attainment of biliteracy.
3. To provide employers with a method of identifying people with language and biliteracy skills.
4. To provide universities with an additional method to recognize applicants seeking admission.
5. To prepare pupils with 21st century skills.
6. To recognize the value of foreign language and native language instruction in public schools.
7. To strengthen intergroup relationships, affirm the value of diversity, and honor the multiple cultures and languages of a community.

Further, the State Seal of Biliteracy certifies attainment of a high level of proficiency, sufficient for meaningful use in college and a career, by a graduating public high school pupil in one or more languages in addition to English.

Section B - Participation

To participate in the Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy Program, the district must submit an application to ISBE each year and agree to adhere to all program requirements included in 23 IL ADM Code Section 1.442 including:

1. Designate at least one individual to serve as coordinator of the State Seal of Biliteracy Program.
2. Participate in training approved by the State Board of Education prior to awarding the State Seal of Biliteracy.
3. Inform parents and students about the program by posting required information on the district's website, if the district maintains a website, and in the student/parent handbook.
4. Utilize one or more of the allowed methods in parts 1.442 (a) and (b) to evaluate students' qualifications for the State Seal of Biliteracy.
5. The District may also choose to award the State Commendation toward Biliteracy to students who qualify following the methods in part 1.442 (c) (1) and (2).
6. Maintain appropriate records in order to identify students who have earned the State Seal of Biliteracy and, if awarded, the State Commendation toward Biliteracy.
7. Make the appropriate designations on the diploma and transcript of each student who earns the award, and
8. Submit an annual report to ISBE no later than 30 days after the end of each school year.

Section C - Minimum Requirements

In accordance with Section 2-3.159 of the Illinois School Code, a school district may award the State Seal of Biliteracy to any high school graduate who meets or exceeds standards in English on a college admission exam and attains a high level of proficiency, sufficient for meaningful use in college and career, in a language other than English. Evidence of this high level of proficiency is the student's attainment of a composite score of "intermediate high" or its equivalent on a standardized assessment that addresses the four domains of speaking, writing, listening and reading in the targeted foreign language as determined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines.

1. English Proficiency Assessments. In order to earn the State Seal of Biliteracy, students must demonstrate proficiency in English through their performance on the following assessments:
 - a. Native English Speakers: SAT or ACT score – meets or exceeds standards established by the State of Illinois.
 - b. ELL students: Earn a minimum overall score of 5.0 with minimum subtest scores in reading and writing of 4.2 on the ACCESS exam.
2. Foreign Language Assessments. In addition to demonstrating proficiency in English, students must demonstrate proficiency in one or more foreign languages through a performance level rating of “intermediate high” or its equivalent on one of the following assessments:
 - a. Advanced Placement language exam (score of 4 or 5)
 - b. Type 1 assessments that are approved by the State Superintendent (e.g. AAPPL and STAMP) for the languages offered in the Glenbrooks.
 - c. An alternative type 1 assessment that is among the State Superintendent’s approved list of acceptable language assessments and the score to be achieved on each that qualifies the student as meeting the criteria set forth in subsection (a)(1)(A)(i) or (ii), as applicable must be pre-approved by the instructional supervisor of World Languages.
 - d. The option available for those wishing to earn the State Seal of Biliteracy in ASL is the (ASLPI) American Sign Language Proficiency Interview.

Section D - Process

Students enrolled in level 3 classes or higher who are seeking to attain the State Seal of Biliteracy are to declare their intentions through the advertised mechanism at their school during the second semester of the junior year through the first quarter of the senior year.

1. World Language Department staff will notify students who are eligible to take an assessment that may qualify the student for the State Seal of Biliteracy. Eligibility is determined by a standardized assessment score for English proficiency, enrollment in a level 3 or higher World Language class, and/or a recommendation by a counselor who is aware of a student’s native language proficiency.
2. Students will choose one of the following assessment options:
 - a. Sign up in the World Language Office to take the AAPPL or STAMP exam (should be completed by February 1 of senior year)
 - b. Sign up to take the AP exam (a student who earns the Seal of Biliteracy through this assessment will receive the Seal after graduation)

Section E - Recognition of Achievement

The State Seal will be affixed to the student’s transcript and diploma, Students who achieve a score of “intermediate low” on the proficiency assessment qualify for the State Commendation toward Biliteracy Award.

Section F - Cost of Proficiency Exam

The State Seal of Biliteracy is an optional credential. Students will be responsible for paying the fee for the proficiency exam. Students who qualify for full financial assistance will have the fee waived, and students who qualify for partial financial assistance will be assessed a reduced fee.

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