

Connecticut Seal of Biliteracy COVID-19 Guidance



April 2020



Connecticut State Department of Education

General Information

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Connecticut's school districts have been forced to move rapidly to a distance learning model of instruction. Despite this change in how instruction is provided to students, districts are encouraged to continue to recognize public high school graduates who have attained a level of proficiency in English and one or more other languages by awarding the Seal of Biliteracy. This guidance from the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is intended to provide recommendations for how the Seal of Biliteracy initiative can be implemented with fidelity through distance/virtual learning, so that multilingual students can be honored and acknowledged for their language proficiency.

Implementation Plan

Ideally, school districts had already developed and adopted a Seal of Biliteracy implementation plan based on Connecticut's Seal of Biliteracy Guidelines before the closures. Districts are strongly encouraged to adhere to the Seal of Biliteracy plan that has been adopted to the extent possible. However, it is important to note that one of the most foundational principles guiding our state's adoption of the Seal is the adherence to equity in its implementation. To that end, we offer the following recommendations:

1. **Standardized Assessment At-Home Options:** Language testing companies are offering at-home parent or guardian proctoring or virtual proctoring options, which include an attestation regarding the security of the testing context. These companies include, for example, Language Testing International, which offers the AAPPL, ALIRA, and OPI/WPT Bundle assessments and AVANT Assessment, which offers STAMP and WorldSpeak. Although parent or guardian proctoring and virtual proctoring are quite different from traditional proctoring in typical times, these options provide a viable manner through which to measure the language proficiency of students to determine their eligibility to receive the Seal.
2. **Portfolio Assessment:** While your district may have been offering a portfolio option only for low-incidence languages for which there was no assessment, you may find that online assessment of students even for which the tests are available is not an equitable option due to a lack of access to technology or other factors. If this is the case, you may consider the portfolio option as an alternative to determine proficiency. Through the portfolio, it is still critical to make every attempt to assess all domains that characterize typical communication in that language, which are typically speaking, listening, reading, and writing. To evaluate a portfolio, the use of a rubric and a review by a committee are recommended in order to ensure calibration.

Distance Learning

Districts are encouraged to think creatively about ways that the Seal of Biliteracy can be implemented during these times of distance learning. While a proctored assessment is highly recommended as the manner by which students demonstrate proficiency, a portfolio demonstrating all domains of the language may be utilized in the absence of an available, proctored assessment or if technological or other factors preclude a multilingual student from being able to access the test. Measuring proficiency is still of the utmost importance in testing for and awarding the Seal, and districts should determine a plan for evaluating portfolios, should this option be needed by some students in order to demonstrate their proficiency.

Contact

Please contact Megan Alubicki Flick at megan.alubicki@ct.gov with questions about implementation in your district. The Connecticut Council of Language Teachers (CT COLT) also provides useful information and resources on the Seal, which can be accessed at <https://ctcolt.org/>.