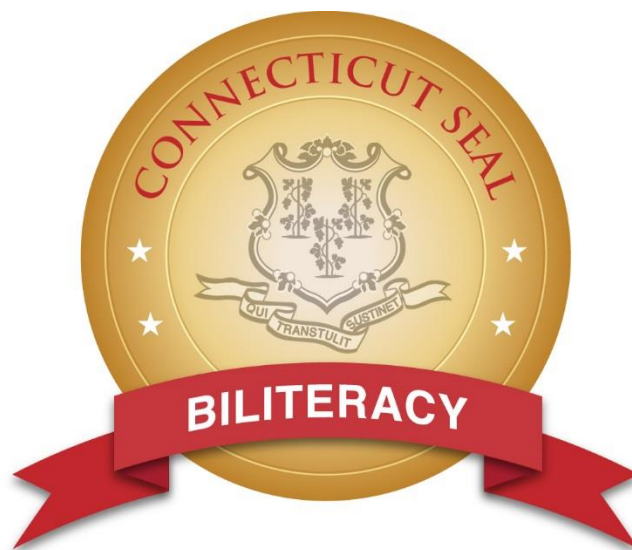


Connecticut Seal of Biliteracy Guidelines

September 2017



Connecticut State Department of Education

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Overview

The Connecticut State Seal of Biliteracy was established to recognize public high school graduates who have attained a level of proficiency in English and one or more languages. On June 6, 2017, the Governor signed the bill into law as Public Act 17-29. Section 1(f) of Public Act 17-29 states, “Not later than September 1, 2017, the State Board of Education shall establish criteria by which a local or regional board of education may affix the Connecticut State Seal of Biliteracy on a diploma awarded to a student who has achieved a high level of proficiency in English and one or more foreign languages. For purposes of this subsection, ‘foreign language’ means a world language other than English and includes American Sign Language and any other language spoken by a federally recognized Native American tribe.” The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) encourages district participation in this initiative.

Purpose

Affixed on the high school diploma and transcript, the Seal of Biliteracy provides immediate recognition of a critical 21st-century language and communication skill. This award is given by a school district in recognition of students who have studied and attained proficiency in English and one or more other languages by high school graduation. The Seal of Biliteracy recognizes the value of students’ academic efforts, the tangible benefits of being bilingual and biliterate and prepares students to be 21st-century global citizens in a multicultural, multilingual world. The Seal of Biliteracy acknowledges that mastery of two or more languages is a valuable asset for both individuals and their communities. Also, the Seal of Biliteracy provides recognition to English learners (ELs) for the great value of developing English and maintaining their primary language.

The Seal of Biliteracy initiative:

- encourages students to study languages;
- certifies attainment of biliteracy skills;
- recognizes the value of language diversity;
- provides employers with a method of identifying Connecticut high school graduates with biliteracy skills;
- assists universities in recognizing applicants with language skills;
- equips students with the 21st-century skills that will allow them to succeed in college and careers in a global society;
- strengthens relationships and honors the multiple cultures and languages represented in Connecticut communities;
- encourages students to develop communicative proficiency in multiple languages;
- values the knowledge and skills of both English speakers learning world languages and English learners studying English or other world languages; and
- recognizes and rewards students’ linguistic and cultural knowledge.

Four organizations collaborated to draft national recommendations for the implementation of the Seal of Biliteracy: the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the National Association of Bilingual Education (NABE), the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL), and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) International Association. To ensure consistency in the meaning of this recognition, the CSDE has created these guidelines for school districts.

Who Qualifies for the Seal of Biliteracy?

All students are eligible to receive the Seal of Biliteracy based on evidence of achieving the designated level of language proficiency in two or more languages by high school graduation. Students must demonstrate the state-determined level of proficiency in English, as well as one or more additional languages in grade 10, 11, or 12.

Districts are encouraged to provide other forms of recognition prior to high school reflecting progress along the pathway toward achieving the specified level of biliteracy, which may occur earlier in a student's educational program.

Paths to Proficiency for Awarding the Seal of Biliteracy

All students should receive information on the Seal of Biliteracy upon entering middle and high school settings so that they are able to organize their schedules and meet the requirements to receive the seal. Districts that have dual language and/or foreign language in elementary schools (FLES) programs are encouraged to share information with students and families at the time of enrollment.

Students may acquire proficiency in multiple languages through various pathways. Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- Traditional middle school or high school world language programs
- Traditional ESL programs
- Bilingual education programs
- Dual language/FLES programs
- K-12 world language immersion programs
- Time spent immersed in the target culture
- Saturday language schools
- Heritage language knowledge

Earning the Seal of Biliteracy

To attain the Seal of Biliteracy, students' use of the language must be demonstrated, rather than their knowledge about the language. Therefore, a student must demonstrate proficiency in English AND another language by meeting the criteria described below.

Eligibility Criteria

Both native and non-native speakers of English must provide comparable evidence of English language proficiency. The language performance should be demonstrated in both social and academic use of the language, in all modes of communication.

The two academic requirements below must be met.

1. Students must complete all English language arts requirements for graduation.
2. Students must demonstrate proficiency in a language other than English at a level comparable to Intermediate Mid on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines as demonstrated through **one** of the following methods in grade 10 or later:

| Assessment | Minimum Score |
|---|-------------------------|
| Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) Measure | I-3 in all four domains |
| Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) or OPIc and Writing Proficiency Test (WPT) | Intermediate Mid |
| International Baccalaureate (IB) World Language Exam (available only to students currently enrolled in IB programs) | 4 or higher |
| Advanced Placement (AP) World Language Exam | 3 |
| ASL Proficiency Interview | 3 |
| Sign Language Proficiency | Intermediate |
| Avant STAMP (STAndards-based Measurement of Proficiency) | Intermediate Mid |
| ALIRA Latin Interpretive Reading Assessment | I-3 |
| DELE (Diplomas of Spanish as a Foreign Language) | B1 |
| DELF (Diplomas of French as a Foreign Language) | B1 |

For a student whose non-English language is low incidence and proficiency cannot be established by any of the assessments in the table above, the following steps must be taken:

- a. District determines a plan for measuring a student’s level of proficiency. This plan, to the extent practicable, includes assessment of interpersonal face-to-face communication as well as interpretive listening, presentational speaking, and reading and writing where a written code exists (see Unique Requirements for Low Incidence or Classical Languages on page 6). **AND**
- b. Certification by the principal, or designee, that a low-incidence language plan was completed.

District Investment

Districts are encouraged to use a range of funding sources to support the costs of language testing. It is critical for districts to consider equity and access when determining how assessments will be made available to all eligible students. Possible funding sources may include, but are not limited to, grants such as Title I, Title I Section 1003 School Improvement funds, Title II, Title III, Alliance District, Commissioner’s Network, State Bilingual, and district funds.

Unique Requirements for Low Incidence or Classical Languages

Due to unique characteristics of certain languages, special allowances may need to be made. In cases where language assessments across all four domains of communication may not be appropriate or available, districts may substitute a different assessment to meet the requirements of the Seal of Biliteracy. Students seeking the Seal of Biliteracy through languages not characterized by the use of listening, speaking, reading, or for which there is not a writing system, will demonstrate the expected level of proficiency on an assessment of the modalities that characterize communication in that language.

Equitable Access

All students, including those with an exceptionality or disability, should have the opportunity to demonstrate their biliteracy. Accommodations should be provided to students per their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan for all assessments.

District Process to Award the Seal of Biliteracy and Transcripts

The Seal of Biliteracy will be added to the student’s transcript and diploma for the specific language(s). School districts are responsible for documenting on the high school transcript that a student has earned the seal.

The Seal of Biliteracy should be awarded by high school graduation. School districts should determine methods for recording the name and identification of students who have earned the Seal of Biliteracy.

More Information

www.ct.gov/sde

www.sealofbiliteracy.org