

Appendix F - Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Seal of Biliteracy?

The [Seal of Biliteracy](#) is an award given by a school or school entity (for example, a school district, charter school, or cyber charter school), in recognition of students who have studied and attained intermediate-high proficiency levels in English and at least one other language. It is a recognition of students' academic efforts, to see the tangible benefits of being bilingual and biliterate, and of being prepared for the 21st century.

2. Who is eligible for the Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy?

Students who have met proficiency criteria as described in the PA Seal of Biliteracy toolkit in both English and another world language through school-based, community-based language programs, or life experiences can earn the Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy.

3. What are some primary considerations prior to implementing the Seal of Biliteracy?

Schools and school entities that decide to participate in awarding the PASB should reflect on the following questions as they design their students' pathways to participate in and achieve the award:

- To what extent do current language curricula facilitate biliteracy development?
- Which programs currently provide opportunities for all interested students to become biliterate?
- How can the school or school entity engage families, businesses, and community members to assist in the design of its PASB program?
- What programs or opportunities can the school or school entity create to facilitate the learning of English and another modern world language?
- Does the school or school entity provide effective English Language Development instruction to English Learners at all levels of proficiency, so they have equitable opportunity to earn the PASB?

4. How are students assessed for the Seal of Biliteracy?

Each school or school entity will describe the criteria and means of assessing the skills of all students who apply for the Seal based on the English proficiency criteria options and the world language criteria options as outlined in the PA Seal of Biliteracy Toolkit.

5. When can students begin working toward the Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy?

The PASB is awarded to students upon graduation; however, schools and school entities can advertise and encourage the pursuit of this award as early as kindergarten. Younger students can actively pursue the PASB through opportunities provided by the school or school entity.

6. What is the role of family and community-based language learning in earning a Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy?

Schools must consider language learning through family and community-based experiences as an asset. Many students in Pennsylvania are born and raised in bilingual

or multilingual homes and communities in which English is not the primary language. Also known as heritage language speakers, these students acquire their world language through interaction within the home, among neighbors, through community-based heritage language programs, and in their community at large.

7. How might students with disabilities earn the PASB?

Students with disabilities should be encouraged to work toward the Seal of Biliteracy. This pursuit should be integrated into the IEP process. The IEP team may decide that students can demonstrate the language proficiency requirements through portfolios and/or by assessments with accommodations based on each student's individualized needs. For example, students who are unable to complete a portion of a required test may demonstrate their skills via an alternative mode. Acceptable accommodations may include large print, auditory tactual access, sign language (ASL for English and world language's sign language), and other means of non-verbal communication techniques to answer questions and convey one's thoughts.

8. What are the financial considerations re: PASB testing and award-related expenses?

Schools and school entities should consider offering language testing to all students at no cost. Based on the proportional percentage of English Learners (EL) who may qualify for a PASB award, ESEA Title III funds may be used to pay for a part of the labor costs and language testing. For students whose primary language is English, a prorated percentage of ESEA Title I & Title IV funds may be used to cover PASB costs.