



Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy

Toolkit



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Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy

January 2022



**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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Foreword

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has a rich cultural heritage, and all of our learners, schools, families, and communities benefit from celebrating cultural and linguistic diversity. To underscore these values, Pennsylvania is establishing a Seal of Biliteracy for students.

The Seal of Biliteracy encourages students to study and attain proficiency in English and another world language to promote civic and global engagement. It also demonstrates that biliteracy and bilingualism are academically challenging endeavors. By earning the Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy, students demonstrate readiness to engage in the global community.

To earn a Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy, a student must demonstrate competency in two or more languages (English and an additional world language, including American Sign Language) upon graduation from high school. The Seal of Biliteracy [website](#) notes, “A Seal of Biliteracy and the Pathway awards are a statement by the school system that mastery of two or more languages is important. It encourages students to pursue biliteracy, honors the skills our students attain, and can be evidence of skills that are attractive to future employers and college admissions offices.”

We at the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) could not agree more.

Pennsylvania is proud to join the 44 other states and entities who have embraced the Seal of Biliteracy, and this toolkit provides a roadmap for schools to implement the Seal of Biliteracy. We hope you find it helpful as you begin the steps to celebrate and recognize learners that are actively engaging in biliteracy and involvement in our global community.



Dr. Noe Ortega
Secretary of Education

Overview

The Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy (PASB) is an award presented by a school or school entity (e.g., a school district, charter school, cyber charter school, or nonpublic school) in recognition of students who have attained intermediate-high proficiency in English and one or more additional world languages upon high school graduation. By establishing the PASB, the commonwealth encourages college and career readiness and engagement as a global citizen through the academic rigor of attaining proficiency in English and one or more world languages by high school graduation.

Purpose

The purpose of Pennsylvania's Seal of Biliteracy is to:

- recognize the value of world language and dual language programs in Pennsylvania schools;
- affirm the value of cultural and linguistic diversity in our schools and communities;
- encourage family and community support for the development of home languages other than English, as well as the study of additional world languages and cultures;
- encourage all students to acquire proficiency in English and another world language;
- certify intermediate-high proficiency in English and another world language;
- provide employers with a method of identifying candidates with biliteracy skills;
- provide universities with a method to recognize biliterate students; and
- promote civic and global engagement.

Pennsylvania does not require schools to offer the Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy nor does it provide financial support or incentives for offering a PASB program.

Students enrolled in a language instruction educational program (LIEP) or world language courses may opt to apply for the PASB. Postsecondary institutions may award credit to students who have received the PASB.

Planning for Implementation

As a first step, the school or school entity must develop a PASB implementation plan. Creating a planning committee to establish a PASB program is critical. The committee should include a wide range of teaching staff (e.g., ESL, world language, social studies), a guidance counselor, administrative staff, parents, and community members.

While the implementation process may vary across schools, the following task list may assist the planning committee toward developing and implementing the Seal of Biliteracy:

1. Define purpose and rationale
2. Identify funding needs and sources
3. Establish a timeline for implementation of proficiency criteria (p. 8)
4. Create an application process

5. Secure the appropriate individuals to develop the assessments for the language(s) that do not have formal assessments
6. Establish portfolio content, assessment and scoring guidelines
7. Validate intermediate-high proficiency in the language
8. Determine award mode of presentation
9. Communicate the program and its value
10. Secure board approval
11. Conduct an annual review of the PASB program to ensure equity, improve pathways, and create preparatory programs in the lower grades where possible

Financial Considerations

Participating schools and school entities must equitably offer this program to all students and should consider providing the program at no cost to students who apply. Potential costs may include:

1. Implementation and maintenance of a PASB program
2. Testing fees
3. Contractual time of school-based committee
4. Communicating the qualification and award process to students, parents, and the community
5. Awards or letters of certification

Based on the proportional percentage of English Learners (EL) who may qualify for a school or school entity's 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 for PASB costs. Note: Title IV funds can be used if it is supplemental funding and the school entity isn't already paying districtwide with state and/or local funds.

Schools or school entities may request the PASB logo [electronically from PDE](#) to create seals for awards or certificates.

Seal of Biliteracy Proficiency Criteria

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

To earn the Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy, a student must:

1. Complete all requirements to earn a high school diploma;
2. Earn an average of final grades equaling “B”, 80%, or higher in all English Language Arts courses taken in grades 9-12 **and** meet any one of the English Proficiency Criteria Options below; and
3. Earn an average of final grades equaling “B”, 80%, **or** higher in all world language courses in the target language in grades 8-12 **and** meet any one of the World Language Proficiency Criteria Options listed below.

English Proficiency Criteria Options	
Option 1	Score Proficient or Advanced on one of the ELA state assessments by 11 th grade: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keystone Literature • PASA (Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment)
Option 2	English learners have met all criteria for reclassification by October 1 of their graduating year.
Option 3	Achieve the following scores on one of these English assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 or higher on an Advanced (AP) English Literature and Composition Examination • 4 or higher on International Baccalaureate (IB) English A: Language and Literature HL • Intermediate High (I-5) or higher on Test Form B on the ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages® (AAPPL) or ESL.
Option 4	Present a portfolio that meets the criteria for listening, speaking, reading, and writing at the intermediate-or higher English proficiency level established by the school’s or school entity’s Seal of Biliteracy committee

World Language Proficiency Criteria Options	
Option 1	Provide transcripts from a school in a country outside the U.S. or in Puerto Rico showing at least three years of instruction in the student’s home language in grades 8 or beyond indicating an average of final grades equaling “B”, 80%, or higher
Option 2	Score equivalency of intermediate-high or higher on one of the modern world language assessments on the list of approved world language assessments
Option 3	Score the equivalency of intermediate-high or higher on a community-based world language assessment normed to the ACTFL proficiency levels as approved by the school’s or school entity’s PASB committee.
Option 4	Present a portfolio that meets the criteria for listening, speaking, reading, and writing at the intermediate-high modern world language proficiency level established by the school or school entity’s Seal of Biliteracy committee to at least one reviewer with high proficiency in the target language

[Approved World Language Assessments](#)

A school or school entity awarding the Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy may select from the approved assessments detailed below.

WORLD LANGUAGE Other than ENGLISH Assessments			
Assessment	Languages	Minimum Score	Cost
<u>AAPPL</u> Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL)	Arabic, Chinese-Mandarin, Korean, French, German, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and English as a Second Language	Intermediate High (I-5)	<u>Yes</u>
<u>AP</u> Advanced Placement Language and Culture exams	Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Spanish	AP Score 4+	<u>Yes</u>
<u>ASLPI (ASL)</u> American Sign Language Proficiency Interview	American Sign Language	3.0 +	<u>Yes</u>
<u>DELE</u> Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera Listening, Speaking, Reading & Writing	Spanish	Common European Framework of Reference for Language Scale B1	<u>Yes</u>
<u>DEL F and DAL F</u> Diplôme d'études en langue français and Diplôme Approfondi de Langue Français: Listening, Speaking, Reading & Writing	French	Common European Framework of Reference for Language Scale B1	<u>Yes</u>
<u>Ellinomatheia</u> Examination for the Certificate of Attainment in Modern Greek	Modern Greek	Common European Framework of Reference for Language Scale B1	<u>Yes</u>
<u>Goethe-Zertifikat B1</u>	German	Common European Framework of	<u>Yes</u>

WORLD LANGUAGE Other than ENGLISH Assessments			
Assessment	Languages	Minimum Score	Cost
		Reference for Language Scale B1	
<u>International Baccalaureate (IB)</u>	Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Spanish	Score 4 or above on High Level (HL)	<u>Yes</u>
<u>LAS Links</u> Spanish language proficiency assessment that measures the speaking, listening, reading, writing, and comprehension skills of K-12 students	Spanish	Intermediate High	<u>Yes</u>
<u>Language Testing International (LTI) assessments</u>	Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese	Intermediate High	<u>Yes</u>
Native American Languages (The PASB will be awarded via an assessment of interpersonal face-to-face communication and interpretive listening and presentation speaking, as well as reading and writing if a written code exists.)	As appropriate	Intermediate High level as determined by the Native American Nation	
<u>OPI and OPIc</u> Oral Proficiency Interview in combination with a reading and writing test in the target language	<u>100+ Languages</u>	Intermediate High	<u>Yes</u>
<u>Penn Language Center</u> University of Pennsylvania	<u>80 + languages</u> Other languages can also be addressed by contacting the center	Intermediate High	<u>Yes</u>
<u>RPT</u> Reading Proficiency Test	Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese,	Intermediate High	<u>Yes</u>

WORLD LANGUAGE Other than ENGLISH Assessments			
Assessment	Languages	Minimum Score	Cost
In combination with WPT, OPI, and LPT when applicable	Russian, and Spanish		
<u>SIELE</u> Servicio Internacional de Evaluación de la Lengua Española	Spanish	Common European Framework of Reference for Language Scale B1	Yes
<u>SLPI: ASL</u> Sign Language Proficiency Interview	American Sign Language	Intermediate Plus	Yes
<u>STAMP 4S</u> Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency	Arabic, Chinese (Traditional and Simplified), French, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Polish, Russian, Spanish	6	Yes
<u>WPT</u> Writing Proficiency Test (in combination with OPI, RPT, and LPT when applicable)	Albanian, Arabic, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish, or more	Intermediate High	Yes
<u>BWA</u> Business Writing Assessment (in combination with OPI, RPT, and LPT when applicable)	Albanian, Arabic, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish, or more	Intermediate High	Yes

NOTE: If a student’s individual education plan (IEP) or 504 Plan provides for testing accommodations, those accommodations must be provided for all assessments administered for both the English and world language examinations.

[Languages without Assessments](#)

For languages without available assessments, students must demonstrate, at a minimum, intermediate-high proficiency in all language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) through a school or school entity designed assessment of the target language or by creating a culminating project in the form of a portfolio assessed using criteria defined in the school or school entity-created rubric. Assessments should be measured and aligned with the [American](#)

[Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages \(ACTFL\) Proficiency Guidelines](#) for intermediate-high proficiency equivalent or higher.

Appendix A - Sample Student Application

PENNSYLVANIA SEAL OF BILITERACY APPLICATION

By awarding the Seal of Biliteracy, <insert school name> certifies a graduating high school student has attained an intermediate-high level of proficiency in English and one or more world languages and certifies that the graduate has met all the defined requirements.

Directions to Applicants:

1. Complete all sections of the application.
2. Submit application and documentation of qualifying scores to your school counselor no later than May 1st of your senior year.

Name:

Date:

Current Grade Level:

Expected Year of Graduation:

Name of School Counselor:

I understand that I must meet all of the following:

- Complete all applicable requirements to earn my high school diploma.
- Earn an average of final grades equaling “B”, 80%, or higher in all English Language Arts courses taken in grades 9-12 **and** meet any one of the designated English Proficiency Criteria Options.
- Earn an average of final grades equaling “B”, 80%, or higher in all world language courses in the target language in grades 8-12 **and** meet any one of the designated World Language Proficiency Criteria Options.

For Guidance Counselor Use Only

Assessment information used to document proficiency in a language other than English:

Language	Name of Assessment	Date Completed	Score*

Student awarded Seal of Biliteracy? Yes No Date:

Comments:

Appendix B - Requesting and Presenting the Seal of Biliteracy

Requesting the Seal of Biliteracy (jpeg)

Schools and school entities may provide qualifying students with a PASB award certificate or a letter acknowledging the achievement in writing.

Individual schools and school entities may produce the physical awards, seal, and/or posters as needed using the PASB logo. No alterations to the PA Seal of Biliteracy design are permitted.

Schools and school entities may request the PASB logo [electronically from PDE](#) to create seals for awards or certificates.

Presenting the Seal of Biliteracy

Schools and school entities may present this award in a variety of ways, including:

- hosting a PASB award ceremony;
- presenting the awards during senior recognition award assembly;
- recognizing students during the graduation ceremony;
- highlighting students who earned the PASB on the school or school entity's social media and/or website; or
- submitting names of students who received the award to local news and media outlets.


Appendix C - Community Outreach Strategies

The key to promoting the valuable assets of Pennsylvania's culturally and linguistically diverse population lies in coordinated involvement with interested institutions of higher education and workforce partners as well as students, parents, and the local community.

Suggested outreach strategies:

- Create an informative webpage that provides PASB information, updates, and events for students, parents, and the community. Be sure to provide translation capabilities for this web-based communication.
- Create and print Seal of Biliteracy brochures in multiple languages to distribute at parent advisory meetings, parent-teacher conferences, beginning of the year packets, registration packets, and in other gathering spaces such as a school's reception area.
- Build partnerships with local businesses, community centers, and heritage language programs that work with various language groups, have international connections, employ non-native English-speaking workers, and/or value rigorous educational endeavors such as learning languages.
- Partner with local colleges and universities to offer language requirement waivers to students who earn the PASB.
- Encourage local community groups and heritage language programs to advertise about their upcoming festivals, parades, and activities within the ethnic community so all students can participate through social and print media.
- Develop heritage and dual language programs in your school or in after-school programs.
- Promote the PASB through community agencies and heritage language programs' press releases in local media sites.
- Host an annual PASB orientation workshop (providing interpretation) to educate parents on the benefits and requirements of the award. Informational events can also occur during back to school nights, kindergarten registration, college planning sessions, career fairs, and other school or school entity-wide events. Invite PASB alumni back to the school to talk in classrooms and assemblies about how the Seal has improved their lives.
- Invite community leaders to meetings, award ceremonies, and school activities to learn more about the PASB.

Appendix D - PASB Flyer



The Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy is an award presented to graduating seniors by their school in recognition of students who show proficiency in English and one or more world languages by high school graduation.

Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy

The Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy:

- Provides future employers with a means of identifying candidates with biliteracy skills
- Provides colleges and universities with a method to recognize applicants with high proficiency in a world language
- Enables students to be college, career, and community ready in a global society
- Affirms and values the linguistic and cultural diversity many students bring to the classroom and workplace
- Encourages partnerships with higher education, businesses, and community organizations to increase language learning opportunities in the 21st century global economy



How does a student qualify for this award?

- Demonstrate intermediate high proficiency on approved world language and English language assessments
- Demonstrate multi-cultural competence through two or more languages
- Meet the school's graduation requirements



Appendix E - Resources

While states and schools vary in terms of requirements, approved assessments, and policies regarding their Seal of Biliteracy awards, exploring how others developed and implemented their programming may assist a school or school entity.

1. Seal of Biliteracy Research
 - a. [National Seal of Biliteracy](#)
 - b. [The Value of Bilingualism and the Seal of Biliteracy](#) 
 - c. [Seal of Biliteracy Implementation: Benefits and Challenges](#) 
 - d. [Pennsylvania State Modern Language Association](#)
2. Economy, Bilingualism & the Workforce
 - a. [Not Lost in Translation, The Growing Importance of Foreign Language Skills in the U.S. Job Market](#)
 - b. [Realizing the Economic Advantages of a Multilingual Workforce](#)
 - c. [Bilingualism is Instrumental to Workforce Success](#)
 - d. [How a Second Language Can Boost the Brain](#)
 - e. [Bilingual College Grads are in Demand, says NIU Survey](#)
 - f. [Most European students are learning a foreign language in school while Americans lag](#)
 - g. [People who speak multiple languages make the best employees for one big reason](#)
 - h. [The advantages of speaking two languages](#)
 - i. [European Day of Languages: The Benefits of A Multilingual Workplace](#)
 - j. [Bilingualism a Key to Addressing Changing Workforce](#)
 - k. [Human Capital Investment](#)
 - l. [The Bilingual Advantage in the Global Workplace](#)
 - m. [A Second Language for Every Student](#)
3. Developing a PASB Portfolio-based Alternative Method of World Language Assessments
 - a. [Massachusetts State Seal of Biliteracy](#)
 - b. [New York State Seal of Biliteracy Handbook](#)
 - c. [Missouri Seal of Biliteracy: Implementation Guide](#)
4. Performance Descriptors
 - a. [ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners](#)
 - b. [NCSSFL-ACTFL Global Can-Do Benchmarks: Intermediate High](#)
 - c. [Linguafolio Can Do Statements for Intermediate High Proficiency](#)

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.

Appendix G - Terms and Definitions

Term/ Acronym	Definition
<u>AAPPL</u>	The ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) is an assessment that addresses the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages. The AAPPL assesses interpersonal listening and speaking, presentational writing, and interpretive reading and listening.
<u>ACTFL</u>	The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) is dedicated to the improvement and expansion of the teaching and learning of all languages at all levels of instruction.
<u>AP</u>	Advanced Placement (AP) is a program created by the College Board which offers college level curricula and examinations to high school students. American colleges and universities often grant placement and course credit to students who obtain high scores on the examinations.
<u>ASL</u>	American Sign Language (ASL) is a complete, complex language that employs signs made by moving the hands combined with facial expressions and postures of the body. It is used primarily by members of the North American deaf community or hard-of-hearing. In New York State, ASL is considered a world language.
Bilingualism	Ability to listen and speak in two languages
Biliteracy	Ability to read and write in two languages; for purposes of this program, biliteracy combines bilingualism meaning the four language skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing
Community-Based Programs	Language programs offered within ethnic and language-specific communities to maintain one’s heritage or home language
Dual Language Programs	Language program in which instruction is provided in English and another target language.
EL	English Learner
ELA	English Language Arts
ELD	English Language Development (program or curriculum)
ESL	English as a Second Language (program or teacher certification title)

Term/ Acronym	Definition
Heritage Language Schools or Programs	Language instructional programs designed to maintain one’s home or family language through community-based or in-school classes
IB	International Baccalaureate is a non-profit, educational foundation offering four programs of international education.
OPI	The ACTFL O ral P roficiency I nterview (OPI) is a valid and reliable means of assessing how well a person speaks a language. It is a 20-30 minute face-to-face or telephone interview between a certified ACTFL tester and an examinee. It is administered by Language Testing International.
OPIc	ACTFL O ral P roficiency I nterview– C omputer (OPIc) is an internet delivered test which provides valid and reliable oral proficiency testing on a large scale. The computer delivered assessment emulates the ‘live’ OPI, but delivery of questions is through a carefully designed computer program, and via a virtual avatar. The test can be taken on-demand, and at a time convenient to the candidate and proctor. It is administered by Language Testing International.
PASB	PA Seal of Biliteracy
Proficiency	The ability of an individual to function and communicate in an acquired language using all four domains of language, speaking, writing, listening, and reading, in real-world situations in a spontaneous and unrehearsed social or academic context.
PSMLA	The Pennsylvania State Modern Language Association (PSMLA) is a non-profit professional organization dedicated to the teaching and learning of languages and cultures from kindergarten through university levels.
SLPI-ASL	(American) S ign L anguage P roficiency I nterview is a holistic language evaluation used to determine global ASL proficiency. The basic precept in this type of evaluation is to determine, through a face-to-face interview, what an individual can do with the target language at a given point in time. The ASLPI is a 20–25-minute video recorded interactive dialogue between the examinee and the interviewer.
WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0	W orld C lass I nstruction D esign and A ssessment A ccess for E LLs is the annual State English Language Proficiency Assessment.
World Languages	The term World Languages is used to differentiate English from other languages.

