



IDEAS THAT INNOVATE

State & Local Policies

Seal of Biliteracy





Seal of Biliteracy

Policy

Recognizing multi-lingual proficiency and attainment as a valued educational achievement and workforce skill.s.

Where it's working

- State of California
- State of New York
- 8 states and over 150 local communities

Players

- State Boards of Education
- Local School Boards
- State and Local Policymakers
- Bilingual Education Advocates
- Chambers of Commerce

What does it mean?

Eight states and over 150 local communities have developed an easy-to-implement tool to recognize high school students who attain a high level of proficiency in two or more languages (including English) by graduation. The **Seal of Biliteracy** encourages students to pursue language acquisition, honors the skills our students attain, and provides evidence of skills that are attractive to future employers and college admissions offices.

What is the Seal of Biliteracy?

The Seal of Biliteracy is an award given by a school, district, or county office of education in recognition of students who have studied and attained proficiency in two or more languages by high school graduation. The Seal of Biliteracy takes the form of a gold seal that appears on the transcript or diploma of the graduating senior and is a statement of accomplishment for future employers and for college admissions.

The Seal of Biliteracy originated in California in 2008 in response to attacks that anti-immigrant forces made on Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. The decade saw its share of English-only proposals, as well as proposals seeking to restrict state benefits. Proud immigrant parents and supporters correctly identified that their children's graduation from Californian high schools represented a triumph for students who were fluent in another language and who had demonstrated their ability to master English as well on their educational journey.

Soon the business community learned of this program and recognized that, indeed, bilingual high school graduates represent an economic advantage to the corporate sector, especially to a state like California that serves as a gateway to Latin America and Asia. Business and immigration advocates joined together to make this a state policy. By 2012, more than 10,000 graduating high school students in California earned this recognition for biliteracy, demonstrating proficiency in English

and at least one of 40 other languages, including American Sign Language.

Why does it matter?

One appeal of the Seal of Biliteracy is its simplicity and extremely low cost of implementation. Most programs put the burden on the student to demonstrate that bilingual literacy by taking achievement, advanced placement, or other tests on their own dime. The Seal of Biliteracy honors the hard work that ESL learners do in the classroom to achieve high school graduation mastery of English, as well as recognizing students who have worked to achieved proficiency in a foreign language, in addition to their native English.

Resources for Action

Seal of Biliteracy Website

<http://sealofbiliteracy.org> ↗

Californians Together, a statewide coalition of parents, teachers, education advocates and civil rights groups committed to improving policy and practice for educating English learners, maintains a separate website to assist communities in the proliferation of the Seal of Biliteracy. Since 2009, Californians Together has been working with schools districts statewide to develop and implement the Seal of Biliteracy.

Materials for Implementation

<https://velazquezpress.com/velázquez-press-seal-biliteracy-recognition> ↗

Velazquez Press, a division of Academic Learning Company, LLC, assists school districts in creating and implementing a seal of biliteracy, including offering testing to confirm language proficiency.

Additional Reading

California State Seal of Biliteracy

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/sealofbiliteracy.asp> ↗

Washington State Seal of Biliteracy

<https://www.k12.wa.us/WorldLanguages/SealofBiliteracy.aspx> ↗

New York State Seal of Biliteracy

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2012Meetings/November2012/1112p12d1.pdf> ↗

Republic of Texas State Seal of Biliteracy

<http://sealofbiliteracy.org/texas> ↗

Minnesota State Seal of Biliteracy

<http://sealofbiliteracy.org/minnesota> ↗

Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy

<http://sealofbiliteracy.org/illinois> ↗

New Mexico State Seal of Biliteracy

<http://tinyurl.com/oh5pgfk> ↗

Louisiana State Seal of Biliteracy

<http://sealofbiliteracy.org/louisiana> ↗

“Foreign Language Push Features New Credential,” Chicago Tribune, October 8, 2014.

<http://my.chicagotribune.com/#section/-1/article/p2p-81612897/> ↗

Contacts

Californians Together, (562) 983-1333

Shelly@californianstogether.org

www.californianstogether.org ↗

Velazquez Press, (626) 448-3448

www.velazquezpress.com ↗